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East Texas



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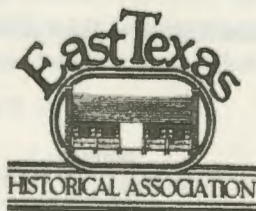


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Bound for Beaumont: Eleanor Roosevelt's 1939 Train Trip through East Texas and Beyond

BY

MARY L. SCHEER

Author's Note: It has long been the custom in our learned society—the East Texas Historical Association—for the departing president to address those assembled at the annual fall meeting in Nacogdoches. This talk, presented on October 9, 2015, represents a personal journey, from my research on Texas and Texas women to one more on the national stage. It is part of a larger project on Eleanor Roosevelt, who not only transformed the role of the first lady, but advocated for social justice, equality, and peace, making her a significant figure in her own right.

Today, probably few people would associate the Roosevelt name, much less Eleanor Roosevelt, with East Texas or even Texas at large. She was born a Roosevelt; she was the niece of a Roosevelt, Teddy; and she was the wife of a Roosevelt—her fifth cousin, Franklin. All were patricians and from New York, a far distance from Texas. Born in 1884, Eleanor grew up to be a tall, shy, young woman who was intelligent, socially-conscious, and a champion of the less fortunate. These qualities attracted her to Franklin, but their marriage was not close; it was essentially a political partnership, one which allowed Eleanor to develop her own independence, her own friendships, and her own interests.¹

When she entered the White House in 1932 Eleanor Roosevelt thought of herself mostly as a teacher, having taught for several years at the Tod Hunter School, a small private academy for girls in New York City.

But now as first lady she had to give up teaching and wondered what she could do that was not the result “of somebody else’s work and

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position.” Eleanor therefore turned naturally to speaking and writing, a choice that helped her navigate the world that she inherited. As a public speaker she adhered to the advice extended her by FDR’s political advisor Louis Howe: “Have something to say, say it and sit down.”²

In choosing to speak and write, Eleanor wanted to accomplish something meaningful with her life and, of course, there was a depression going on with real human need. There was also a mood of experimentation in the country to try and solve the crisis. Since her husband was confined to a wheelchair due to polio, she literally was his “eyes, ears, and legs” during the 1930s and 1940s. As an astute observer and “publicist for the New Deal,” Eleanor traveled across the nation, making sure that federal agencies maintained their effectiveness and that the individual was never forgotten in the burgeoning bureaucracy.³

During her White House years, the first lady earned the nickname “Eleanor Everywhere.” In addition to her normal schedule of sponsored radio talks, press conferences, newspaper columns, election campaigns, and White House duties, she also contracted with the management firm of W. Colston Leigh to make two lecture tours a year. Such a hectic, unprecedented pace for a first lady caught the attention of the editors of *Life* magazine. In 1940 they reported that since moving into the White House Eleanor had traveled more than 280,000 miles, visited every state but South Dakota, shaken more than a half-million hands, given hundreds of lectures, and “probably not wasted as much time as the average person does in a week.” In fact, she was on the road so much that one Washington news headline announced a rare occurrence. It read: MRS. ROOSEVELT SPENDS NIGHT AT WHITE HOUSE!⁴

In March of 1939 Eleanor Roosevelt embarked on one of her lecture tours, this time through the South and into Texas, for which she was paid \$1,000 per speech. At the time working as a first lady was generally not standard behavior. But Eleanor Roosevelt was a non-traditional woman who just happened to be the president’s wife. Earning her own money provided her with a sense of personal fulfillment and enabled her “to do many things for which her own income was insufficient.” Further, she didn’t want “be a financial drain on her husband.” So beginning in 1935 she contracted every

spring and fall to deliver speeches across the country on selected topics, ranging from social responsibility and the problems of youth to world peace and a typical day at the White House.⁵

Never a great public speaker, Eleanor Roosevelt soon became more comfortable on the public stage as time went on. She took elocution lessons to correct her high-pitched, shrill voice, but was never satisfied with her performance. She suffered from nervousness and worried that people considered her as simply a “mouthpiece” for her husband. As an individual with opinions of her own, but also as the first lady, she had to walk a tightrope between her views and the official positions of her husband’s administration. Despite her claims that FDR did not try to discourage or muzzle her, Eleanor never felt completely free to voice her own thoughts and opinions until she was out of the White House and on her own after 1945.⁶

As she began her lecture tour in 1939, the nation and the state were in a state of transition. Texas had benefited at the federal money trough, but the depression, although waning, was not yet resolved. Many of the New Deal reforms of the past six years had peaked and lost their crusading force. Events on foreign soil were now distracting Texans from the large scale government spending programs to issues of isolationism, neutrality, and preparedness. Even President Roosevelt, in his annual State of the Union message to Congress in January of 1939, said as much when he referred to the recent military aggression by Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and imperial Japan.⁷

But before the world dissolved into open hostilities, most Texans in early 1939 were still more concerned with day-to-day events at home than events abroad. With over 300,000 Texans still out of work or on relief, they worried about the price of cotton, the continuation of public works jobs, and the stabilization of wages and taxes. Events such as the upcoming visit to the United States of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England, when the first lady dared to serve royalty hot dogs, and the announcement of Lou Gehrig’s retirement, the great New York Yankee first baseman, after contracting a neuro-muscular disorder, grabbed national headlines. News about the invasions by Germany of Austria and Czechoslovakia, while condemned, seemed distant and none of their concern in the months before the outbreak of World War II in Europe.⁸

By 1939 the First Lady was well versed with the issues facing Texans. Blessed with good health and energy, she was already a tireless traveler, crisscrossing the country and journeying thousands of miles. Eleanor had met and talked to those suffering from the depression across the nation. She had spoken out on controversial issues and openly supported new initiatives to solve some of the unjust situations she encountered. And she had filed detailed reports to her husband, particularly on the success or failure of many federal programs. As one *New York Times* reporter observed at the time, except for the president, she was “the best informed individual on the American scene.”⁹

Eleanor Roosevelt began her three week-long train trip on March 6, 1939, accompanied by her secretary Malvina (Tommy) Thompson, nine small suitcases and “the inevitable knitting bag.” Her route began in Washington D.C. and would take her through the segregated Deep South, into Texas, and then westward to California. Opposed to the prevailing Jim Crow laws at the time, she had earlier committed an act of civil disobedience at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama, by sitting on the “black side” of the meeting room. Further, Eleanor had resigned from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) when black singer Marian Anderson was banned from Washington’s Constitution Hall, which was controlled by the DAR. For these actions and others, she was both loved and hated in the South and had received death threats from the Ku Klux Klan. But the reality in 1939 was that segregation policies were socially entrenched and legally enforced. She therefore reluctantly traveled by train in segregated train cars and spoke at segregated facilities as she moved throughout the South.¹⁰

The purpose of this 1939 train trip was three-fold: First, to deliver paid lectures to many places throughout the country to which she otherwise might never have gone. Second, to report on New Deal programs to her husband “as a check against the many official reports he received.” And third, to keep the Roosevelt name and the administration’s policies before the public. It was not all business, however, as she also found time for sightseeing and visiting family along the way.

Fortunately, we know a lot about Eleanor’s itinerary and thoughts through her syndicated newspaper column entitled “My Day,” her own *Bully Pulpit*, which she wrote six days a week beginning in 1935 until her death in 1962. Many of her opinions, observations, and daily

movements found their way into these columns. Written in a simple, matter-of-fact way, and in language that the average person could understand, no activity or subject was too humble or too lofty to report. For example, she wrote on a wide range of topics from gardening and childcare to human rights and politics. She also wrote about her travels and impressions of the people and the country during the Great Depression. From a historian's standpoint, these columns provide a valuable day-to-day, firsthand account of where she traveled, whom she met, and what issues, large and small, she encountered.¹¹

Eleanor Roosevelt began the first leg of her trip, heading south through Virginia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana, visiting local communities and inspecting New Deal programs. She gave public lectures at Natchez and Vicksburg, Mississippi. Her last stop before crossing into East Texas was at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There she visited Southern University in Scotlandville, just north of Baton Rouge, and toured a school for African-American children, headed by civil rights advocate Mary McLeod Bethune. This black education program was part of the National Youth Administration (NYA)—a New Deal program that Eleanor Roosevelt had directly championed and helped create. Aimed at youth, whom she called the “stranded generation,” it provided job training for young people between the ages of 16 and 25, who had dropped out of school and into a stagnating economy. But at the time the president was reluctant to add another federal relief program to the New Deal and he took a lot of convincing. So Eleanor worked on him at the usual time for discussion of such questions—“right before he went to sleep.” Preferring sleep to argument, the president eventually succumbed. On June 26, 1935, he signed executive order 7086 creating the NYA, which would also make a young 26-year-old Lyndon Johnson, the first NYA director in Texas. In 1939 it was this agency that was uppermost in her mind as she toured Texas and the South.¹²

As chief advocate and publicist for the NYA, Eleanor Roosevelt boarded the train in Baton Rouge on March 9, writing in her daily column that she was “bound for Beaumont.” At every station along the way people came to greet her, bringing flowers. Although outspoken and often controversial, she was still popular. In fact, the Gallup poll that year showed that the first lady outranked the president, winning 67 percent approval compared to FDR's 58 percent.¹³

Prior to arriving in Beaumont, a young female reporter—Merita Mills—joined Eleanor Roosevelt on the train in DeQuincy, Louisiana, for the ride to Beaumont. This followed the first lady's practice of holding female-only press conferences in the White House and meetings with women journalists in the field. She believed that it gave women journalists a chance they would not otherwise have received in a male-dominated profession. Obviously star struck by the first lady, Mills repeatedly referred to Mrs. Roosevelt as "my president's wife," and wrote that meeting the first lady was like "brushing against the flag." Engaged in friendly conversation as the Texas landscape slid by the train window, Mills asked the first lady what young women could do to serve their country. Eleanor answered by suggesting the remarkable work done in hospitals and government offices by the NYA, as well as civic and charitable organizations. If government would provide training for volunteers over a period of time, Eleanor advised, then young people could render "some service which would be of use to the communities in which they live."¹⁴

Eleanor Roosevelt crossed the Sabine River into Texas at the Deweyville crossing. She traveled through Mauriceville, a town of about 60 residents, and arrived in Beaumont, the county seat of Jefferson County with a population of almost 60,000. A crowd of over 5,000 people greeted her. This was the first visit by a first lady to the city then or since. Disembarking at the Kansas City Southern Station in downtown Beaumont, she was welcomed by Mayor Ray Coale, along with members of the Altrusa Club, a local women's service organization. The Orange High School Bengal Guards then escorted her vehicle to the Hotel Beaumont, an eleven story hotel constructed in 1922. There she enjoyed a brief concert, followed by a short rest before beginning her day's event-filled agenda.¹⁵

Prior to her scheduled evening lecture, Eleanor Roosevelt met with NYA representatives from Jefferson County. She was "extremely interested" in their projects and learned about the county NYA training programs in woodworking, childcare, metal work, and nursing. Students were also taught "to cook and make flags," and given job assistance. Roosevelt stressed that it was impossible for the NYA alone to fully solve the youth problem; it would require "the assistance of the people in the communities."¹⁶

“The Relation of the Individual to his Community” therefore became the theme of her lecture at the civic center that evening. Dressed in a long velvet gown, the first lady urged the audience to think about their responsibilities to their community. She advised that they should begin by studying their own neighborhoods and local government, and with that knowledge they could improve their lives not only at the local and state levels, but also in the nation and in the world. It was up to the individual to make democracy work, she emphasized, and “you can’t say it is anybody else’s business, because it is not; it is yours!”¹⁷

Following her lecture, she customarily hosted a question and answer period—even taking questions meant to embarrass her. Here she could find out what was on the minds of her audience. While she generally tried to avoid politics, her audience did not. One question that evening from a Beaumonter was whether FDR would run for a third term. Due to the depression and possible war in Europe, many wondered if he would be a candidate again in 1940. She laughingly replied: “You’ll have to ask him yourself. There are just some things one doesn’t ask.” Yet privately, Eleanor feared another four years in the White House. She worried about her husband’s health, but also about the constraints placed on her as first lady. Additionally, there were many Americans who were constitutionally opposed to a third term, and some even suggested that Eleanor run instead and “Keep a Roosevelt in the White House!” Whenever the topic came up, however, she dismissed it, claiming that one president in the family was enough. Besides, Eleanor argued, she was too old and the country needed newer and younger leadership.¹⁸

Another pressing issue for many Texans at the time was the recent occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia by Adolph Hitler. When questioned about the prospects for world peace, she stated that it divided into two distinct situations: the long-time view into the future and the immediate situation. “All you can do in the immediate situation is to look at it realistically and see what actually is going on and back whatever action seems to be most helpful at the time.” A strong believer in disarmament, she eventually came to the painful realization that the U.S. would have to abandon its isolationism and neutrality. In the current situation, she stated, “we as a nation are foolish if we do not keep our arms up to a point where we can

adequately defend ourselves." Since the president was still publically pledged to not getting involved in any foreign wars, Eleanor could say things as a trial balloon that the president could not. FDR, the consummate politician, could then weigh public reaction based on her probing comments and public reception.¹⁹

The next leg of her journey was from Beaumont to Fort Worth to spend the weekend with second son Elliott and his family. Unfamiliar with East Texas, she expected to see "a rather arid state." Instead, she saw green "fields which have evidently had more than their quota of rain." She made one brief stop at College Station where Elliott was one of the trustees at Texas A&M College. There she inspected resident NYA projects in agriculture and animal husbandry, catching a quick glimpse of the dairy and farm facilities.²⁰

Arriving in Fort Worth on March 10 aboard the "Alamo," a special car attached to the Southern Pacific Railroad, she was met by her two-year-old grandson Elliott, Jr. and her daughter-in-law Ruth Roosevelt. Elliott, Sr., who was not always on good terms with his parents and eventually divorced four times, was in New York and unable to be present. He owned and operated several radio stations (Texas State Network) and often disagreed publicly with his parents over a third term for his father, American intervention in Europe, and his mother's friends in the American Youth Congress, a suspected communist organization. In fact, that was one reason why Eleanor Roosevelt had one of the largest FBI files at the time. Nevertheless, Eleanor looked forward to seeing her son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren on his Texas ranch. Her crowded schedule included an interview at a radio station, a discussion with "two gentlemen from the NYA," and then a train ride to Abilene for a speaking engagement on "A Day at the White House" at Hardin-Simmons University. This hectic pace left everyone but Eleanor breathless.²¹

On March 13 Eleanor left Fort Worth by car to travel to Sherman, Texas. Again, she was scheduled to give a public lecture, this time to the Texas League of American Pen Women, a woman's club to promote female creative activities. While in route, a dust storm erupted, but her driver assured her that "we never have any bad ones in this part of the State." But that was not the case and the storm proved to be "the worst they had seen." Visibility was limited and the car had "to stop once

or twice because we could not see the road ahead very clearly." This firsthand experience of the effects of the Dust Bowl convinced the first lady of the need for soil conservation programs in regions without rain for so long. In her column the next day she wrote: "There is no doubt that much of the country which has been put under cultivation should go back into grass and be used as range for cattle."²²

Returning to the Roosevelt ranch, Eleanor had time to visit with Elliott and catch up with the family. Later that evening they attended the Southwestern Exposition and Stock Show in Fort Worth with Texas Governor and Mrs. O'Daniel. Her first experience at "a real rodeo," impressed Eleanor. Being a horsewoman herself, she appreciated the cowboy's ability to ride and their "strength and agility in dealing with cattle." Eleanor's overall impression of the region was stereotypical: She called it "cowboy country" where even in the larger cities, Texans are conscious of "the picturesqueness of this part of their population."²³

After three very busy days, Eleanor Roosevelt said goodbye to her grandchildren and left Ft. Worth for Houston. This third leg of her trip was first by car and then by train. Driving with Elliott and wife Ruth, they first stopped at Hillsboro to see "a practice house for girls." This NYA facility was an innovative school for rural girls to attend for two weeks and then return home for two weeks to put into practice what they learned and then the cycle would repeat. Arriving in Waco to meet the train, Eleanor had time to inspect a building constructed at the municipal airport by the NYA boys and meet with the NYA State Advisory Committee. After a brief rest, she then boarded the train, arriving in Houston the next day.²⁴

In 1939 Houston was a town of about 375,000 residents where, with the help of private banks and welfare agencies, the depression came later and left earlier than other parts of the nation. As was her custom, before she disembarked from the train she met the public and press on the train platform for a brief speech. Later, in her Rice Hotel suite, she held a press conference, followed by a tour of Jefferson Davis Hospital where NYA girls held jobs. Accompanied by J. C. Kellam, state NYA supervisor, and Houston director W. O. Alexander, she then traveled to a rural school in Cypress and talked with NYA boys who were building a house for the school superintendent, to Hempstead to inspect a new community center, and then to Prairie

View College, the only state supported black college, to inspect NYA dormitories. The day ended with a reception and an evening lecture at the Sam Houston Coliseum.²⁵

Following her brief Houston stay, Eleanor Roosevelt left East Texas to continue her journey. On this fourth leg of her tour she drove to the Rio Grande Valley, a region known for its citrus fruits and vegetables. Arriving in Edinburg, her first visit to this part of the state, she wrote in her daily column that the area resembled "Southern California or in Florida." After a brief crossing into Mexico, she toured Engleman Gardens, a ranch of about 11,000 acres, and viewed citrus groves and a packing plant. She also drove through Weslaco where an experimental station was "developing various new usages for the products of the valley." The next morning, March 17, was the thirty-fourth anniversary of her marriage to FDR. With no mention of it in her "My Day" column, she drove to Harlingen, "paralleling the line of the Southern Pacific Railway." Along the way she viewed the Rio Grande River that supplied the essential water supply to the region. Reflecting her own philosophy to see things for herself, she observed: "In this big country of ours we have to see things with our own eyes to realize the things which may spell ruin to the entire section and yet which mean so little in other parts of the county."²⁶

Leaving the valley on March 18, Eleanor Roosevelt arrived by train to San Antonio, the fifth leg of the trip. Accompanied by Mayor Maury Maverick, his wife, and Mrs. Harry Drought, she visited local industries and historical sites. Always a staunch supporter of labor, especially women in the workforce, Eleanor was keenly interested in the needlework industry and the conditions of its female workers. The real difficulties, she observed, were not in union shops, but in the home garment work done outside organized industry. Other concerns were the replacement of handmade goods by machines and the high tuberculosis rate in the city.²⁷

Along with her visits to local industries, Eleanor also found time to visit the old Spanish Governor's Palace, "a beautiful piece of restoration," the Witte Museum, where a pioneer log cabin was being built by the NYA boys, and several WPA projects. Afterwards, she boarded the train for the last leg of her journey.²⁸

Eleanor Roosevelt's last day in Texas was spent riding the rails through "miles and miles of desert" through West Texas. Looking out her window the next morning she saw "a few cattle, some goats and some sheep with their lambs," moving about. Crossing the Pecos River Bridge, she gazed down into the 381 foot canyon. She passed dry arroyo beds and small ranch houses. As she crossed into New Mexico heading for California, she now looked forward to visiting daughter Anna and son-in-law John, who were expecting their first child. But before leaving the state, she reflected on her impressions of crisscrossing Texas and talking to its citizens:

These people are all conscious of the riches of the state in which they live. They know that there are vast natural resources still undeveloped. They know that they grow certain things at a day [and] time when a ready market is to be found in other state. [sic] However, you hear one complaint from them: "Why can't we get action from the Interstate Commerce Commission and Congress in the matter of freight rate differentials."²⁹

This 3-week train trip to East Texas and beyond was both ordinary and extraordinary. It was ordinary because it demonstrated Eleanor Roosevelt's genuine interest in the common man. By seeking out a cross section of people, she wanted to ensure that the New Deal relief agencies served the most needy and neglected groups, including blacks, women, and sharecroppers. She also spoke in a simple language to ordinary men and women about their day-to-day concerns during the waning years of the Great Depression. She learned about all manner of issues and problems that affected Texans, from the lack of rain and loss of jobs to needlework and even freight rate differentials. Her unassuming manner and sincerity convinced people that she cared about their problems and would use her influence and access to power to try and correct injustices. But her appeal was not based solely on her relationship with the president. Audiences were enchanted with her personality, her directness, her humanitarianism, her warmth, and her unselfish interest in people. This was acknowledged by both her adversaries, as well as her friends.

At the same time this trip was extraordinary in the sense that the First Lady, initially a shy and submissive young woman and wife, could carve out a public role for herself other than official hostess at the White House. Her experiences and travels certainly did not fit into the standard role for first ladies. No other first lady before or since could match her energy, public service, or concern for the downtrodden. Her lecture tours took her to places such as East Texas to see firsthand the needs of the people. Never elected to public office, Eleanor acted as an intermediary between the average citizen and the government. Her trip was also remarkable in that she traveled without the use of the secret service or police escorts. In fact, she refused to be trailed by secret service agents. Only after she demonstrated the ability to protect herself with a concealed gun that she carried did the secret service agency acquiesce in her going without their protection. As humorist Will Rogers observed about Eleanor, who often traveled alone, "No maid, no secretary—just the First Lady of the land on a paid passenger ticket" to somewhere.³⁰

Ultimately, Eleanor's 1939 train trip to East Texas and beyond, expanded the image of the First Lady, promoted the New Deal agenda, and exerted political influence on the administration. It also was a platform to understand the needs of the forgotten man and woman during the depression and throw light on such programs as the NYA, which she championed. But historians and others disagree on her significance and effectiveness. Was she a busybody as some thought or a political insider and confidant of the President? Should a first lady work for pay or be expected to volunteer for certain causes? Did she neglect her family by her frequent trips or provide a needed service for her disabled husband? Was she a humanitarian reformer or a radical who threatened the foundations of American society? Never elected to public office, did she exercise political power or feminine influence to pursue her own social causes? While Eleanor Roosevelt always denied that she exerted any political influence on her husband or anyone else in government, saying that she was just passing along requests or suggestions that came to her, the historical record tells another story. What we can say is that Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the most controversial and influential women in Washington, and her 1939 train trip through East Texas and beyond allowed her to play a key role in connecting the public to their government during the worst years of the Great Depression.

Notes

1 There is a large amount of Roosevelt historiography, both of Franklin and Eleanor. Several good sources on Eleanor include: Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin* (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1971, reprint 1973); Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, 2 vols. (New York: Viking, 1992; 1999); Tamara Hareven, *Eleanor Roosevelt: An American Conscience* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968); Hazel Rowley, *Franklin and Eleanor: An Extraordinary Marriage* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010); Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor, The Years Alone* (New York: New American Library, 1972); Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Times: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon & Shuster), 1994; Joan Hoff-Wilson, *Without Precedent: The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). Eleanor also wrote her own autobiography, *This I Remember* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949).

2 Speeches and articles, 1934, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York, hereinafter cited as ER Papers. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin*, 553.

3 Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin*, 551-570; *Time*, XXV (June 24) 1935), 9; William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper, 193; 2009), 192.

4 *Life*, 1940.

5 Generally, the president did not curb his wife's activities. His attitude was that she could say anything she wanted and he could then say: "That is my wife; I can't do anything about her." Eleanor frequently donated her radio and lecture fees to charity, especially to the American Friends Service Committee. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin*, 555; Eleanor Roosevelt Biography, National First Ladies' Library, 12-13, www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=33 (accessed August, 10, 2015).

6 Roosevelt, *This I Remember*, 152, 164; ER to L. Hickok, April 19, 1945, ER Papers; Eleanor Roosevelt Biography, 12; Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 164.

7 Franklin D. Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, January 2, 1939, Washington D.C.

8 Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1937), 199-207; Robert A. Calvert, Arnoldo De León and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 3d ed. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2002), 320.

9 David Emblidge, ed., *My Day, 1936-1962* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2001) 34.

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“Let Us Be Law Abiding Citizens” Mob Violence and the Local Response in Harrison County, Texas, 1890-1925

BY
BRANDON JETT

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the problem of mob violence permeated American society. Mobs harassed, assaulted, and even killed social outcasts at alarming rates. From the 1890s through the mid twentieth century, however, mob violence became increasingly racialized as white mobs across the South shot, hung, and burned thousands of African Americans for perceived rebukes to the racial hierarchy implemented during Jim Crow. At the regional level, the number of lynchings reached their highest point in the early 1890s and declined throughout the subsequent decades. As the southern economy changed, southern African Americans migrated to northern cities, and southern whites relied more on the formal legal system to police racial boundaries. Lynching was a regional phenomenon. Nonetheless, the history of lynching played out differently from county to county throughout the South. Despite the trend in recent lynching scholarship to move away from case studies and focus on larger regional and national trends, it is important to understand the nuances to the history of lynching at the local level.¹

An examination of these processes in Harrison County, Texas, provides an interesting case study that complicates some of the larger trends in lynching in the South. First, the number of lynchings in Harrison County between 1890 and 1910 was relatively low, but from 1910 to 1920, the number of lynchings rose dramatically. Second, the underlying causes of lynchings changed from the 1890s to the 1910s and 1920s.

Only one lynching occurred in the 1890s and grew out of a personal dispute. During the first decade of the twentieth century, whites in Harrison County resorted to lynching twice after African Americans

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murdered local law enforcement agents. During 1910s, the peak years of lynching in the county, evidence suggests that community whites response to a downturn in the local economy. In these hard economic causes of lynchings became increasingly trivialized as whites lynched African Americans for alleged crimes ranging from sexual assault in 1911 to attempted robbery in 1917.

Finally, the local white response to lynching tended to follow the larger national/regional pattern of acceptance in the 1890s and early 1900s to disapproval by the 1920s and 1930s. However, it was the rise of the area Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s that prompted local white authorities to condemn vigilante violence in an unprecedented manner as the Klan not only attacked local blacks, but also threatened local whites with violent intimidation and political subordination.

The roots of extralegal violence run deep in Harrison County. From 1839 to 1844, the Regulator-Moderator War engulfed the county's frontier settlements. Regulators originally organized to protect the local populous against cattle thieves that occupied the Neutral Ground, a previously disputed strip of land that ran east of the Sabine River from the Gulf of Mexico to the Red River, that until 1821 was claimed by both the United States and Spain. The Regulators soon ran unbridled throughout the Neutral Ground counties. In response, a group called the Moderators arose in an effort to control the Regulators, who began not only attacking cattle thieves, but operating more like a gang. In Harrison County, these two organizations battled each other in the early 1840s over personal disputes and for vigilante control of the region. After years of rampant violence, the vigilante groups disbanded when Texas president Sam Houston sent the militia to pacify the region. The dispute between the Regulators and the Moderators ended when both agreed to cease hostilities and join together to serve in the Mexican War.²

The economic development of Harrison County coincided with the end of the Regulator-Moderator War. Citizens developed the thriving agricultural potential of the county. "Rich, loose, and easily cultivated" soil abounded and the county was heavily timbered. Easily accessible transportation promoted growth. Water transportation allowed for easy export of agricultural goods to larger markets. Caddo Lake in east Harrison County connected to the Red River, which flowed directly

into the Mississippi River about seventy miles northwest of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. From there, agricultural products made it to New Orleans. The county quickly became one of the major cotton producing areas in Texas. By 1860, the output of cotton increased by 366 percent from the previous decade and ranked third in all Texas counties. This production prompted the introduction of railroads. The Southern Pacific Railroad connected Marshall, Texas, the Harrison County seat, to Shreveport, Louisiana. It made the transportation of goods to New Orleans faster and more efficient. This railroad was one of only ten other railroads in the entire state prior to the Civil War. Agricultural production boomed in Harrison County because of the large supply of labor, fertile soil, and easy access to markets.³

Improvements in transportation and favorable environmental conditions encouraged the growth of slavery in Harrison County. Harrison County claimed the largest slave population in Texas and by 1860, 8,726 slaves were held in the county and slave based agriculture dominated the economic landscape. Slave labor produced 94 percent of the total cotton output for the entire county in 1859. Not only did slaves produce the vast majority of agricultural goods, they also accounted for the most significant economic investment for whites in Harrison County. Slavery was an invaluable part of the local economic system and social structure and was completely disrupted by Emancipation and Reconstruction.⁴

When Union forces arrived in Texas in 1865, Harrison County became a focal point for Union occupation forces and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands because of its black belt status. During Reconstruction, the main thrust of Freedmen's Bureau efforts in the county centered on getting the freedmen into labor contracts with local landowners. Although this goal benefitted local landowners, resistance to federal encroachment and attempts at equality were met with heavy resistance. White employers took advantage of the freedmen, withheld wages, enforced mobility restrictions on black laborers, and used the threat of violence to ensure black compliance. Most whites in the region approved of this violence. The Bureau leaders attempted to enforce fair treatment of the freedmen, but proved "less than effective" at containing violence, especially outside of the city limits of the county seat, Marshall. One of the Bureau representatives in Marshall, 1st Lt. Isaac M. Beebe,

complained that local whites, "upon the slightest provocation beat, knock down, and shoot" freedmen. Ku Klux Klan violence against blacks proliferated. The Klan also targeted freedmen's schools and burned them to the ground. Lawlessness defined the three and a half years of the Freedmen's Bureau's efforts in Harrison County, as "outlaws and vigilantes, not federal law, ruled."⁵

Despite violence and intimidation, freedmen and Republicans remained politically active. Republicans, supported by the large black population that voted for them, dominated local politics from the 1860s up through 1880 and helped local blacks realize their political power. From 1868 to 1879, for example, eleven blacks represented the county in the state legislature. In response to the political force of "carpet-baggers" and the local black population, the Ku Klux Klan organized in an attempt to gain a political advantage in the county. However, as the editor of the *Tri-Weekly Herald* reported, "The political status of this county is settled for years to come; nothing that we can do will change it." Because of the overwhelming black majority in Harrison County, Republicans won local, state, and national elections easily. For example, in the presidential election of 1876, the Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes, carried Harrison County by a margin more than 1,600 votes.⁶

White conservatives did not "redeem" Harrison County until 1880. Local blacks and Republicans continued to win local and state political offices. To regain control of local politics, a coterie of conservative whites formed the Citizens' Party and began a campaign against blacks and their Republican supporters. During the 1880 county election, allegations of fraud and intimidation were rampant, but a misplaced polling box allowed the Citizens Party to gain complete control of the local government. County Election Officials allegedly placed the polling place for the third precinct outside of the precinct's jurisdiction. Therefore, the votes cast in the precinct three box were cast by people voting in the wrong precinct. If officials did count these votes, Republicans would remain in control of the county. Harrison County's Citizens Party contested the election results to the state. Conservative white Democrats dominated state courts and, not surprisingly, declared that the votes would not be counted. Due to a misplaced box, the Citizens Party defeated the Republicans and controlled the county politically. Historian Randolph Campbell

described the Citizens Party victory as “a virtual *coup d'état* thwarting majority rule through a trifling technicality.” Local whites realized that violent intimidation was an effective way to limit the political ambition of the black majority. Furthermore, when white Democrats controlled the levers of state and local power, there was no need to fear retribution. Local whites so thoroughly dominated local politics that no blacks represented the county in any state office after 1880 until the 1950s, when the Citizens' Party finally lost political control of the county.⁷

However, the loss of political power did not eliminate all opportunities for local blacks. Education, the chief means of social advancement, flourished in the county. In the two decades following emancipation, churches established two black colleges in the county. In 1873, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church established Wiley College, and in 1881 the Baptist Home Missionary Society founded Bishop College. Both schools followed the Booker T. Washington approach and focused on vocational and religious training. Wiley College offered courses in printing, farming, shoemaking, gardening, shorthand, typing, cooking, sewing, and housekeeping. According to the 1887 Wiley catalogue, these skills had a “healthy influence” on the black students. By 1915, enrollment in Wiley and Bishop reached 755. The vast majority of Harrison County blacks, however, did not attend either school, although local blacks looked up to the students as role models. White residents also supported the industrial education programs promoted by the two black colleges. When introducing Booker T. Washington on October 21, 1911, to a crowd at Wiley College, the former county superintendent of public schools, Chesley Adams, praised Washington and his educational ideology. He also commented on the local black population, stating, “They are intelligent, peaceful and law-abiding, largely because of the influence of these two schools.” In a black belt county, whites viewed vocational education as an important tool that promoted black subordination by channeling blacks into low-level positions.⁸

In spite of the social and political turmoil that followed the Civil War and Emancipation, the local economy and population thrived. From 1870 to 1880, Harrison County's manufacturing sector flourished. Capital investment in manufacturing expanded during the decade from \$43,750 to \$93,275. Although initial growth was slow, the manufacturing sector grew exponentially over the next several

decades. From a total investment of \$93,000 in 1880, capital investment in manufacturing grew by more than 700 percent to \$720,286 by 1890. Growth continued throughout the 1890s, but slowed compared to previous decades. By 1900, the total capital investment in countywide manufacturing came to just over \$1,000,000. By 1904, Harrison County whites boasted of the foundries, mills, nurseries, two wagon factories, soda water apparatus factory, impressive quantities of iron ore, and three banks. More importantly, however, was the fifty-ton cotton oil and seed mill with the capacity to press 45,000 bales of cotton annually.⁹

Agricultural production also expanded. Cotton drove agricultural expansion. The total value of agricultural production increased from \$878,745 in 1870 to \$948,421 in 1880. Total agricultural output declined somewhat in the 1880s and fell to \$874,040 by 1890, but rebounded in the next decade and totaled over \$1,520,427 by 1900. Growth seemed almost inevitable in the two decades following 1890 and by 1910 agricultural growth climaxed and the total value of all crops totaled \$2,378,144.¹⁰

Accompanying the economic expansion and diversification, more and more people migrated to the county. The most dramatic population growth came during the 1870s when the population nearly doubled from 13,241 to 25,177. Population growth remained steady and by 1910 had grown to 37,243. Although faced with some slumps in overall growth, the trend in Harrison County at the end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the 1900s was one of modernization and growth.¹¹

Despite the history of vigilantism in Harrison County, economic growth and diversification seemed to limit the number of lynchings during the 1890s. In fact, the only lynching in the decade seems to have grown out of a personal dispute, not a communal defense of white supremacy. On April 27, 1897, Hal Wright and his son, Paul, proceeded to the local courthouse after being summoned to appear before the magistrate. Authorities charged Wright with the crime of having "words with white men the day previous." Public displays of disrespect by blacks against whites often resulted in violence as whites struggled to maintain their superiority in the face of increasingly resilient blacks. Such minor violations of social customs demanded strong reaction by local whites, especially in a black belt county, in

which they were a numerical minority. On the way to the courthouse a small mob of four white men "met and accosted" the Wrights, killed Paul, and wounded Hal. Hal fled, only to return a few hours later with a friend, Bob Brown, to recover the body of the deceased child. Upon their return, another mob of masked men finished the job, killing the wounded Hal Wright and fatally wounding Brown. According to historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage, mob actions of this sort are best understood as "a form of private vengeance." Although the actual mob involved in the killing was small, a crowd of nearly seventy-five curious onlookers watched as the white mob murdered the men in broad daylight and suggests the larger community approved of the mob action. Investigators arrived on the scene the next day, but "the officers could not find one who knew who did the shooting" and the ephemeral investigation came to naught. The lynching near Harleton, in the northwest corner of the county, did not attract major attention in the local paper and did not appear to cause major disruptions in county. Whites had little sympathy for any black who stepped out of place and often used violence as a means to enforce social mores and racial hierarchies.¹²

In the first decade of the twentieth century, white mobs lynched two African Americans. Both of these lynchings followed the death of law enforcement officials at the hands of black suspects. African Americans often distrusted southern law enforcement and perceived the legal system as corrupt. At times this resulted in violent conflicts between southern law enforcement and African Americans. On October 1, 1903, for example, Walter Davis, a local black man, was arrested by Constables Charles Hayes and Sid Keasler. Although Hayes and Keasler arrested Davis, he did not go quietly and "when some distance from the place of arrest they [Hayes and Keasler] were fired on by negroes from ambush." During the ambush, Davis' brother and some of their friends shot Constable Hayes. Following the constable's murder, authorities arrested Walter Davis, Mich Davis, and their stepfather, Nathan Hilton, and placed them in the county jail at Marshall.¹³

The murder of a white law officer by a group of blacks epitomized the major fear among southern whites: armed and organized blacks willing to kill whites. While the three black men sat in jail, news of the constable's murder spread. Men from adjoining towns crowded

into Marshall, "and by 7 o'clock it was plain to everyone that an effort would be made to hang one or more of the Negroes." In response to the growing mass of agitated men, Sheriff Calloway, according to reports, called "out the Marshall Company to protect the jail and prisoners;" however, the militia did not assemble quickly enough. Only six militiamen had gathered by 7:30, but in a move that suggests local law enforcement's complicity in the lynching, all six men left their post together and went to the local telegraph office to send a message. At the exact moment that the guards left their post, a man "on the square raised his hand above his head whistled a low whistle, and quickly half a dozen men closed in around him." These six men, along with an unspecified number of other spectators, grabbed a telephone pole, broke down the jail wall, entered the jail, and brought Walter Davis out with a noose around his neck. Davis was marched to a nearby bridge, hung, and "a number of shots were fired into his body as it hung." Following the lynching, "the mob dispersed as quietly as it assembled..." and life in Marshall continued as though nothing had happened.¹⁴

Authorities appeared to make only token efforts to maintain a semblance of law and order in their city. The actions of the militia and the authorities to enforce law and order were nothing short of negligent. In addition to the suspicious activity of the six-man militia, law enforcement was also noticeably absent from the affair, thus leaving the two black prisoners at the mercy of the mob. As the Marshall Messenger reported, "The Musketeers got out on very short notice, but the mob...got to the jail and had the prisoner on shorter notice." In addition to the tardiness of the local militia, the sheriff and other law officers did nothing to stop the mob. Even though "the mob had been organizing for hours," the sheriff and many of his officers had apparently gone fishing. Far from coincidental, these circumstances demonstrate local authorities' approval and complicity in the lynching.¹⁵

African Americans from outside the county who were unfamiliar were almost as troubling to southern whites as were armed and organized local blacks. Itinerant blacks had no local family ties, no "restraining, taming, legitimizing white-man link to the white man's world," and in the eyes of many southern whites, had poor character, and often corrupted local blacks. Therefore, when three peripatetic

blacks killed a local sheriff, whites alleviated their fears through violence. On April 26, 1909, Deputy Sheriff Mark Huffman raided a craps game with Deputy Constable Alex Cargill. During the raid, both deputies were shot, Huffman died and Cargill was seriously injured. "Creole Mose" Hill, Mat Chase, and Jesse Jefferson, all from Louisiana and with no local ties, emerged as the three prime suspects. Authorities captured the black men in Wascom, Texas, twenty miles east of Marshall, charged the black men with the murder, and took them to the infamous county jail in Marshall. The militia from Longview was called in to "take charge and prevent a lynching but it [was] thought there [was] no danger of a mob dealing out summary justice." Nonetheless, as an extra precaution, local authorities closed all saloons and ensured a "speedy trial for slayers of Huffman."¹⁶

Despite the superficial attempts of authorities to thwart any semblance of mob violence, local papers stoked the flames of discontent. The *Marshall Messenger* painted a negative picture of the black prisoners. One report emphasized that "a worthless gambling cap-follower" had murdered Sheriff Huffman and further warned, "That if the crime went unpunished, similar crimes might be committed at any time." Many southern whites believed that all black criminals threatened the safety of the community, and especially white womanhood. For several days it appeared the law would take its due course. Men from all over the region flooded into Marshall, but "the assurance of a speedy trial satisfied most of them, and many returned home."¹⁷

Authorities essentially promised a quick conviction and death for the three black men, but the sluggish nature of the legal system failed to appease the white community. The grand jury was called and issued bills of indictment against the three men for murder, assault to murder, and for robbery with use of firearms to murder. With charges being brought against them, authorities felt the threat of mob violence passed and the militia was relieved from duty at 11:30 a.m. on August 29. "Now that the critical moment has passed and the machinery of the law well in motion," one reporter stated, "it is hoped that no further talk of mob law will be indulged in and the law will be allowed to takes its course." The man responsible for relieving the militia was the brother of the injured officer Alex

Cargill. Three hours after the militia left, a mob stormed the jail and lynched Hill, Chase, and Jefferson. Again, local law enforcement allowed the mob to lynch black men after the wheels of justice began spinning. Whites did not lynch in lieu of ineffective courts, but instead demonstrated to the black majority that legal protection and rights was inaccessible to blacks. No condemnation of local law enforcement surfaced, but the local newspaper praised the mob as "quiet and orderly."¹⁸

The potential for further violence amplified as the economic growth from previous decades disappeared during the 1910s. Agricultural production, the base of Harrison County's economy, plummeted. The total value of all crops produced throughout the decade fell by just over seventy-five percent from \$2,378,144 to a meager \$578,545. The decline in the overall value of crops pushed more people into farm tenancy. From 1910 to 1920, the number of tenants rose from 2,381 to 3,353, with the overwhelming majority, eighty-two percent, being black; however, the number of white tenants also increased during the same period from 381 to 581. Tenancy meant black dependency on white property owners, increasing debt, and single-crop agriculture. Across the South, the combination of economic and social crises "heightened tensions and exacerbated violence" especially in regions and counties where whites sought to reinforce the racial distinctions so crucial to the plantation economy.¹⁹

Although the economic downturn hit black farmers the hardest, whites projected their fear about harsh economic times onto local blacks and blamed the weak agricultural returns on poor farming techniques and the abundance of tenant farmers. "The tenant farmers," one local posited, "ruin the soil by growing the same crop on it year after year and seldom if ever replenishing it with fertilizer of any sort." In actuality, local tenants had no control over the crops they produced. White property owners demanded tenants grow cotton on all available land. The author further expressed local discontent with the economy, stating, "The total value of farm property in this county is on \$6,683,461 and it should be ten times that and would be ten times that if we had better farming methods."²⁰

Despite the faltering agricultural economy, the Harrison County population grew by 6,322 inhabitants during this period. Although

struggling economically, the county still offered many opportunities that most rural places did not. Education, easy access to world markets, and a burgeoning manufacturing sector brought in migrants from around the region. This population growth further strained the struggling economy. The increase of people coupled with the decline in the agricultural economy corresponded with an eruption of violence aimed against local African-Americans.²¹

Rough economic times impeded rural white males from providing for their families, driving these frustrated men to find another way to protect their women and children: eliminating the purported threat of rapacious blacks. In October 1911, whites in Harrison County came to the "defense" of "Mrs. Green," a local white woman. The *Marshall Messenger* reported that Will Ollie, a twenty-four year old black man, attacked Mrs. Green and threw a rope around her neck in an attempt to choke her. Mrs. Green lay prostrate on the ground while Ollie went to her house to get matches. As he came to the house, he was startled by Mrs. Green's daughter, who alerted neighbors and the local sheriff. Ollie fled, but for several days following the incident, hundreds of local men scoured the region "for miles in every direction in search of him [Ollie]." During the search, the local press described Ollie negatively. The paper even attacked Ollie's family background, postulating, "Will Ollie's father...has spent a good portion of his life in the penitentiary."²²

These character attacks did not stop with Ollie and his father and, as one local editorial illustrated, were aimed at the entire black population of the county. During the manhunt for Will Ollie, the local paper printed a commentary entitled "The Negro in the Country." This commentary illustrated the perception held by some whites regarding the region's black population. The writer explained "the conditions that surround us in this section of Texas," and offered advice for rural citizens who lived outside of the protection of urban law enforcement. The writer stated, "No white woman is safe at any time in the country with the low, vicious negro for a neighbor." He argued that law-abiding African Americans were rare among the community and concluded that "when a negro of the brute class attacks a white woman or a white man for brute reasons it is time to eliminate the brute." The Ollie story is emblematic of southern claims of white women's victimhood, regardless of the implausibility of the claims, in times of economic recession.²³

An editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* expressed the fears of whites living in a black belt county. Blacks comprised around sixty percent of the total population of the county throughout much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This made whites uncomfortable. The best way to deal with the “brutes in the Negro race,” argued the commentator, was “by sheer Caucasian domination.” The solution offered up by the commentator was to encourage mass white settlement in the county in an effort to “crowd him [blacks] out, show him that he is not wanted and then give good white men his place.” However, whites, in the author’s opinion, would not settle in the county “unless we...rid ourselves of the Negro brutes.”²⁴

In this atmosphere of fear and resentment, a lynching was imminent. Local posses captured Ollie twenty-two miles west of Marshall in Longview, Texas. Upon capture, the angry mob, not local authorities, hustled Ollie into a car and brought him back to Mrs. Green’s residence. By this time, “it was pretty generally known in Marshall and the surrounding country and a mob began to form in the neighborhood of the Green residence.” Mrs. Green identified Ollie as the perpetrator, essentially signing his death warrant. The mob hurried the young black man to the Texas and Pacific railroad and continued their interrogation. Ollie denied all accusations and even implicated another local black man, Jim Nesbitt, but to no avail. According to *the Marshall Messenger*, “Ollie was swung up to a limb and hanged” by a mob of several hundred men at about 2:15 in the morning. Reports described the mob as “quiet and orderly and not a shot or loud, boisterous word was said to have been heard.” Although several hundred people witnessed the lynching of Will Ollie, the coroner reported Ollie died at the hands of “parties unknown.” Authorities did not question anyone, including Mrs. Green, the alleged victim. County officials also did nothing to apprehend the lynchers, suggesting many of them participated in or knew members of the mob.²⁵

Defending the white community also encompassed protection from black murderers. In October 1912, when authorities found white Harrison County resident Paul Strange murdered in Elysian Fields, located eighteen miles southeast of Marshall, Texas, they feared a lynching was likely. Following the murder, authorities quickly arrested a local black man named Tennie Sneed on unsubstantiated evidence. In their efforts to ameliorate the potential for mob violence, Harrison

County officials placed Sneed in the Gregg County jail in Longview, Texas, twenty-three miles west of Marshall. The fears of authorities were well founded, as ten men visited the Harrison County jail around midnight on February 9, 1912. According to the jailer on duty, these men were there to make an "inquiry about the negro." The men were from the same neighborhood where both Paul Strange and Tennie Sneed resided. In addition to the ten men from Elysian Fields, "many more in the city... came here [to the Harrison County jail] for the same purpose." Some local authorities, however, told local whites where Sneed was incarcerated and a small group of men quickly traveled by train to Longview to verify the rumors regarding Sneed's location. Less than six months after the lynching of Will Ollie, authorities understood that lynching remained a real threat. Therefore, authorities acted proactively to eliminate the threat of mob violence and preemptively removed Sneed to the state penitentiary at Rusk for "safe keeping."²⁶

Not to be deterred, local whites' thirst for black blood was satisfied nonetheless. On the night of February 15, 1912, authorities found Mary Jackson and George Sanders hanging from a limb. Jackson and Sanders lived in the same house as Sneed and whites accused them of furnishing Sneed with the gun used to murder Paul Strange. The mob lynched the two blacks near the place where Strange was murdered. According to the county commissioner, Sanders was sixty years old and "always considered a good negro," and the forty-year-old Jackson "protested all along" that they had no involvement in the murder of Paul Strange. While locals "protected" white women during the difficult economic times, they held no regard for black women. It did not matter to whites if their victims were innocent or guilty; a white man died at the hands of a black man and someone had to pay. The mob would have their vengeance and until they did, no blacks were safe.²⁷

Authorities called a grand jury to investigate the killing of Paul Strange, George Sanders, and Mary Jackson. According to reports, even though the grand jury examined several witnesses, it failed to find sufficient evidence to indict any member of the lynch mob. Black life was cheap in the black belt county and the grand jury demonstrated that blacks fell outside of the protection of the local legal system. However, the grand jury did find sufficient evidence to indict Tennie Sneed for the murder of Paul Strange. The indictment against Sneed meant a trial would be held in Marshall.²⁸

In the wake of the Sanders and Jackson lynching, authorities limited the threat of mob violence in an unprecedented manner. Two militia companies, the Marshall Musketeers and the Timpson Company, were brought in to protect the jail. Not only did authorities protect the county jail, but District Judge H. T. Lyttleton also “ordered that the local express company offices not to deliver any whisky, beer or intoxicating beverages.” In addition, authorities searched everyone in the vicinity of the courthouse for firearms and other weapons. Authorities hoped these steps would decrease the threat of mob violence and guarantee a fair trial would occur in Marshall. It appears that the precautions worked—“Quiet Prevails About The Jail” ran across the front page of the local newspaper as local militiamen turned Marshall into a makeshift military camp.²⁹

Authorities defended this exceptional defense of a black criminal to local whites. They quickly proclaimed that their actions did not stem from sympathy for the alleged murderer. One editorial vehemently assured the public that “Tennie Sneed... is not being protected as much as are law and order.” The editorial comforted citizens of Harrison County by explaining that authorities’ actions represented not the protection of African-Americans, but more so the integrity of the state and local laws. It identified two things that local authorities and citizens must understand if the sanctity of law and order was to prevail in Harrison County. Law enforcement, according to the editorial, must enforce laws “without regard to the standing of anybody in any way, and see that no illegitimate law, like that of the mob, interfere with the action of the state law.” The writer pleaded with the citizenry to understand that “if we expect to maintain decency we must obey the law.”³⁰

Local whites apparently bought the argument and the trial of Tennie Sneed commenced. Sneed’s lawyers first requested a change of venue stating as justifications “the fact that the defendant is a negro and had killed a white man, the prominence of the Strange family, the hanging of the two negroes...the attempt to get Sneed by the mob, newspaper articles...and various other reasons, it was impossible to get a fair and impartial trial in Harrison county.” In spite of these claims, the local judge denied the request and the trial continued as originally planned, in Marshall. Tennie Sneed claimed he killed Paul Strange in self-defense and both the prosecution and the defense brought in witnesses who either vouched for or argued against Sneed’s claim. The burden to sub-

stantiate Sneed's claim was based mostly on Sneed's own testimony, because many witnesses were hesitant to testify on the defendant's behalf. According to the *Marshall Messenger*, the defense team submitted a document that suggested why no witnesses would come forward. This document showed "that the two negro witnesses of the defense had been hung and could not be brought into court...witnesses had [also] been whipped and threatened." Sneed's defense team realized that vigilante violence threatened the legal system in many ways.³¹

Upon hearing testimony from local witnesses, the judge handed the case over to the jury. The jury deliberated for two days and returned to the courtroom deadlocked. They told Judge Lyttleton that they could not reach an agreement. Ten of the jurors believed Sneed was guilty and two wanted an acquittal. Despite the lack of evidence and intimidation of witnesses, the jury refused to find Sneed not guilty. The judge accepted this and demanded a retrial. Sneed remained in custody and Sheriff Sanders took him back to Rusk penitentiary for safekeeping as he awaited a new trial. It is unclear what happened to Tennie Sneed after he was placed in Rusk Penitentiary. "The War Is Over" exclaimed one local newspaper. Sneed was now the responsibility of the state of Texas, authorities relieved the militia, and the judge dissolved the ban on alcohol in Marshall. "Marshall," the report continued, "is again at its normal condition that existed before the Negro was brought to the jail ten days ago." Authorities seemed more willing to protect Sneed only because whites already wreaked vengeance on two blacks for the murder of Paul Strange, and further vigilantism could descend into real chaos.³²

As the economic recession deepened, even blacks accused of petty crimes were targets for white frustrations. In February 1913, two young black men, Robert Perry and George Redden, faced trial for theft of a hog. Larceny carried serious penalties for blacks in the South that sometimes resulted in harsh prison sentences and even death. Following their appearance before local Justice of the Peace W. S. Baldwin in Karnack, Texas, Constable Ed Odom escorted the men seventeen miles to the Harrison County jail in Marshall to await Grand Jury action. The jury would have undoubtedly found the two men guilty, but in the year after the Tennie Sneed debacle, locals took the law into their own hands. On the way to Marshall, a mob of whites "overpowered" Constable Odom and killed Perry and Redden. Authorities' commitment to protecting black prisoners proved ephemeral. Just one

year after authorities had demonstrated their ability to protect blacks in custody from lynch mobs, Harrison County authorities confirmed that their loyalties laid with lynch mobs and not with law and order.³³

Even trivial offenses such as attempted burglary soon became reason enough to lynch blacks, as stories and allegations of rape became more far-fetched. By 1917, whites became increasingly desperate and in their attempts to demonstrate their manhood in tough economic times they began to conjure up the black rapist more frequently. In late August 1917, Harrison County authorities arrested nineteen-year-old Charles Jones for burglary. Allegedly, Jones cut the screen out of the window of Reverend Heggins' home and entered. The Reverend was not home, but his daughter and wife were. It is unclear why Jones entered the house, or why he left. Authorities arrested him eleven miles southeast of Marshall in Elysian Fields and took him to the county jail in Marshall, where Jones confessed to the attempted burglary.³⁴

While Jones sat in jail, tensions escalated. In addition to attempted burglary, Heggins' wife and daughter claimed Jones "approached the bed and touched the hand of one of the young ladies." Local county sheriff, John C. Sanders, understood the threat that accompanied the alleged crime and "had jail [sic] doubly guarded." This did not deter local white from "protecting" the white women. On the next day, at about noon, five men with handkerchiefs covering their faces entered the jail. This small force of locals apparently overpowered the large force of guards on duty and forced Raymond Cain, the jailer, to open the cell that held Charles Jones. The mob then hurried Jones into a waiting automobile parked outside of the jail and headed south. Raymond Cain, the jailer, accompanied by the local sheriff proceeded to chase down the small mob, but unfortunately for Charles Jones, the two men were too late and "Jones had been hung" by the time they arrived.³⁵

Local authorities seemed utterly incapable, or more likely unwilling, of defending Jones. In spite of Sheriff Sanders' inability to protect Jones, he knew "who composed the mob," and vowed, "that they will be prosecuted." Initially, Sheriff Sanders appeared to be a man of his word and filed charges against five men for their alleged involvement in the lynching of Charles Jones. Following their arrest, however, the five men were released on bond of \$5,000 each and

“since the grand jury has not yet met, there is so far no formal charge against them.” The grand jury proved as committed to law and order as the men who guarded the jail.³⁶

As the number of lynch victims climbed higher, some local whites feared this trend. Following the lynching, an editorial was published that illustrated the changing mood in Harrison County. An editorial in the *Marshall Messenger* expressed concerns regarding the prevalence of unchecked vigilante violence in Harrison County. The author began with the question, “Will the day ever come in Harrison County when mob violence will have ceased and give place to the proper execution of the law?” The outcry following the lynching of a man accused of assault or murder of a white citizen was limited and did not seem to alarm whites, but the murder of a black man for theft of a hog worried some. As the author stated, “to deliberately take the life of a man, a negro...for no other purpose...than stealing a hog makes the value of the man that of a hog.” Although appearing in favor of the black man’s life, the author’s concern actually focused on the fate of white men if mob violence continued in the county. The author worried, “human life will become cheaper and cheaper and white men will be killed because they do not vote for certain people and we will have a reign of terror.” Mob violence was an acceptable form of social control, but some whites feared the mobs would eventually turn against them.³⁷

As the motivations for lynching became increasingly trivial, local blacks struggled to make sense of their plight. It is difficult to gauge black responses to lynching and mob violence in Harrison County. No black press existed and, if the African-American community did protest, no records remain. According to census records, the black population continued to grow from the 1870s to the 1930s, which suggests no large-scale black out-migration occurred as a response to racial violence.

However, in 2001, local black man George Dawson published an autobiography that offered insight into the lives of blacks in Harrison County. Newspapers provide important insight into life in Harrison County, but as Dawson noticed when looking at Marshall newspapers, “this paper was not about the Marshall that I knew...[articles] only had white people in them.” Dawson discussed the lynching of his friend Pete Spillman in the opening chapter of his book. He also noticed that nothing in the local paper discussed this lynching. “I don’t even find that in the newspaper. They didn’t talk about those things. I guess I am

the only man alive that knows the truth about Pete Spillman.”³⁸

Dawson’s retelling of the lynching of Spillman illustrated the effects racial violence, especially lynching, had on local blacks. Dawson described Pete as an average black man who picked cotton and did other odd jobs for local whites. According to Dawson, a local white woman accused Spillman of raping her and the mob was determined to “make that boy pay and show all the niggers that they can’t get away with this.” The author specifically remembered the lack of effort on behalf of the local sheriff to stop the mob as they cheered and laughed at the sight of a lynched black man “like it was a picnic.” As a young boy who did not fully understand the implications of Jim Crow, Dawson remembered his feelings immediately following the lynching. “This hurt...I cried and my daddy wrapped his arms around me and held me to his chest...I cried for me. I cried for Pete. I cried for the little ones and for Mama and Papa. I cried for all the pain that there was in this world. Papa had his own tears and he just held me.” The impact of lynching on blacks was clear in Dawson’s account. Both the image and message of the lynching were obvious, even to a young black child, and etched into his memory: “I didn’t forget...I’m one hundred and one years old now. But I still remember.”³⁹

Lynching and racial violence did not just haunt the memories of local blacks, but also affected the way they lived their everyday lives. Segregation had legal backing; it was codified, and predictable. However, lynching was arbitrary and unpredictable. Anyone at any time could face the threat of mob violence which ensured that blacks lived in fear of upsetting local whites and local customs. As Dawson remembered, racial violence was not an everyday occurrence, but “we could always feel” the threat of violence lingering. The fear of mob violence and Dawson’s memories of the lynching of Pete for associating with a white woman discouraged Dawson from interacting with white women as much as he could. When approached by a young white girl on a farm that he worked on, Dawson, even as a young boy, knew he should not engage in conversation with the girl. In fact, Dawson refused to even talk with the white girl. He “kept [his] mouth shut...[he] knew that saying too much could just cause trouble.” Dawson knew that interacting with a white girl could upset any number of whites and, he remembered, “It’s a white man that will decide when a colored man is in trouble.” Dawson’s story tells us that lynchings had the desired effect

on blacks, especially in terms of propagating a desire to stay away from white women and a respectful fear for the unbridled authority of white men.⁴⁰

Following a decade of recession, the Harrison County economy resurged throughout the 1920s. Between 1920 and 1930, capital investment in manufacturing rose from \$2,260,828 to \$2,688,548. More importantly, however, the agricultural sector recovered. The total value of all crops skyrocketed by more than 700%. Starting at the depressed value of only \$578,545 in 1920, by the end of the decade the value of all crops totaled a staggering \$4,341,741. Harrison County's population also continued to increase during the 1920s, growing by 12.3 percent and totaling 48,937.⁴¹

As the status of the economy changed, so did the character of mob violence in Harrison County. In previous decades, local mobs only targeted local blacks, but in the 1920s, mob violence threatened local whites as well. This was a direct result of the second Ku Klux Klan, which emerged between 1915 and 1924. The Klan of the 1920s differed from the Klan of Reconstruction and attracted a more broad-based coalition of support among white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. The revitalized Klan of the 1920s championed anti-Catholicism, white supremacy, anti-Semitism, anti-radicalism, anti-immigration, and a "drive to maintain crumbling Victorian standards of personal conduct."⁴²

The Klan steadily grew in influence in Texas during the early 1920s. The maintenance of Victorian values became the "most powerful stimulus for the prodigious growth of the Klan in Texas." The Klan quickly became a dominant force in Texas. It challenged the state and local political structure and dictated community mores. In 1922, for example, Texans elected Earle B. Mayfield, an open supporter of the KKK, to the United States Senate. At the local level, the Klan became so dominant that in Dallas, former governor Jim Ferguson reported, the Klan "elected nearly all the county officials."⁴³

The Klan also grew in response to increased organizational efforts by Texas blacks. Beginning in 1918, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People organized a strong membership drive in Texas in an effort to eradicate lynching and end political, social, and economic discrimination. Across the state, branches opened in cities such as Houston and Dallas, and in more rural locations like Marshall.

Locally, the NAACP officially organized in January 1919. Fifty blacks comprised the initial charter members, but by the end of the year, membership had risen to ninety-seven. White vigilance committees formed to control the increasingly organized and boisterous black community. Their efforts appear to have succeeded, because the local NAACP chapter did not survive to the end of 1920.⁴⁴

The organization of vigilance committees culminated in the formation of a Harrison County chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. The local Klan chapter 168 announced its presence on January 27, 1922. Upwards of 10,000 residents gathered on the streets of Marshall as the Klan paraded through the town. Onlookers watched in subdued fascination as three horsemen carrying a cross led by 371 "cloaked, hooded men marched through the streets of downtown."⁴⁵

Klan 168 also pursued an all-out campaign to gain support and members among the citizens of Harrison County. In a published statement in the local Marshall newspaper, the Klan announced its mission and encouraged locals to join. The statement challenged the manhood of locals and described the quality of their members as:

men whose constant thought is MY COUNTRY; may she ever be right, and never wrong, but right or wrong, MY COUNTY; men who teach their children to see in the nation's flag the sacrifice of martyrs on the altar of liberty, justice and freedom; the eternal vow of a proud race that America shall be white, the fond hope of our souls, that America is the hope of humanity from the oppression of tyrants and shackles of hierarchy. Men who believe in true freedom of conscience and teach their children that the Holy Bible is the book of life and the true guide to their faith and practice.

The Klan put on concerts and banquets to help gain local support, and as a result it enjoyed the approbation of many citizens in Harrison County. For example, on September 22, 1922, the Klan held a rally in Harrison County just four miles outside of Marshall where "1000 of the hooded figures were present, and that 102 were being initiated into

the order." Through such elaborate spectacles, the Klan made their presence known to citizens of Harrison County.⁴⁶

Reminiscent of punishments in the antebellum South, the local Ku Klux Klan turned to the whipping post as a form of social control. The *Marshall Morning News* reported on March 7, 1922, that a small mob "caught a negro...who had some booze on him, strapped him to a log and gave him 100 licks of the lash." Mack Abney reported that the mob assaulted the black man in an effort to end bootlegging in the county.⁴⁷

Klan mobs often turned deadly. A local black man, Isaiah Sanders, had his feet tied to one tree and his hands bound to another tree with his face on the ground. The mob whipped his legs, back, and shoulders for two hours. The beating was so severe that Sanders died a few hours later. The Klan attacked Sanders because he allegedly insulted Robert Green, a local white property owner, and "called him a liar" after Green accused Sanders of mismanagement of his crops. White landowners throughout the south consistently cheated black tenants out of their fair share of the harvested crop. When blacks questioned the fraudulent practices of white property owners, the result was often deadly.⁴⁸

Klavern no. 168, however, also targeted local whites who did not comply with traditional Victorian customs. According to historian Charles Alexander, the Klan of the 1920s focused more on "moral authoritarianism" than racial superiority. The KKK demonstrated this authority through threats and outright violence. In Harrison County, at least fifteen white citizens received warning letters from the Klan due to their breach of proper social ideals promoted by the KKK. Local white business owner Ray Daniels became the first victim of outright vigilante Klan justice in Harrison County. On February 20, 1922, the Klan abducted Daniels as he left the Marshall post office. Daniels "was knocked on the head, loaded in an auto that had no lights burning or number showing, carried a half mile or more out of town, partially stripped, tarred and feathered, brought back to town, dumped out on the sidewalk, bloody and wounded." The abductors then dropped Daniels on the steps of the Marshall National Bank at the feet of Chief Sheriff's Deputy Ellis Johnson. Although the men were not hooded, Daniels had previously received orders from the KKK to leave town. Many citizens, including the members of

the Marshall Chamber of Commerce and the Marshall Rotary Club, concluded that the Klan was behind the attacks.⁴⁹

The Klan attack on a local white troubled many citizens of Harrison County. In an editorial in the local newspaper, one citizen argued that the Klan directly threatened the laws of the United States. The Klan, the writer argued, threatened the sanctity of the United States government and “the fundamental doctrines of our republic and if persisted will bring on an era of anarchy.” Another plea to let law and order prevail in Harrison County came a few days after the abduction of Daniels. The author pleaded, “Let us be law abiding citizens and co-operate with our officers and courts, in punishing criminals as prescribed by our sufficient LAW.” The abduction of Ray Daniels caused an outcry among many whites in ways that mob violence against local blacks did not. The earlier fear that mob violence would not be reserved for local blacks had come true: whites now faced the looming threat of mob violence.⁵⁰

The fear of local Klan domination encompassed more than just vigilante justice, and reflected concerns for KKK political domination. Klan membership throughout the state exploded in the 1920s and by 1922 the total state membership was between 75,000 and 90,000.⁵¹ The Ku Klux Klan became a political powerhouse that controlled many local, state, and national political races. According to one estimate, the Ku Klux Klan held the majority of the state House of Representatives in 1923 and, in the opinion of some locals, “overwhelmingly rule[d] the house.” The Klan was also a local political force. As one reporter exclaimed, “The Klan is no longer something to be looked on as being in Atlanta. Its [sic] here in Texas, here in Marshall.” The Klan penetrated all aspects of local politics and even “invaded the courthouse,” to the extent that, “Men are chosing [sic] their lawyers right here in this county, not on account of their legal ability, but because of their supposed friendliness to the Klan.”⁵²

The combination of Klan violence and Klan attempts to impose influence on local politics and economy sparked trepidation in many white residents. They feared the Klan, and soon that fear turned to anger. One editorial blasted the hypocrisy of the Klan for neglecting the community’s protection of the laws and due process, but when authorities captured members of the KKK whipping parties, the organization

called "for all the protection of the law and howls for the benefits of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the Magna Charta." Citizens of Harrison County also attacked the Klan on religious grounds. Another editorial in the *Marshall Morning News* asked, "Did the religion of Jesus Christ say that in order to enter the Inner Shrine a man must be a native of America, a member of the white race, a Gentile?"⁵³

Backlash against KKK attempts to dominate state and local politics elicited the most ardent anti-Klan rhetoric. Residents questioned the manhood of Klansmen and demanded "they take off their nighties and masks, [as] they have lost the respect of their more intelligent sympathizers, who will not now join a secretly manipulate star chamber group to function in politics in a democracy where the people directly or indirectly control." They fought vigorously against KKK domination of politics, especially in the 1924 election for governor. Felix D. Robertson was the Klan-backed candidate in the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary. "If this city and county votes for Robertson," one author posited, "it will be proclaimed to the world as a Klan city and Klan county and before 60 days you will see '100 Per Cent' business houses in Marshall, '100 Per Cent' doctors and '100 Per Cent' lawyers." Prominent whites feared the growing influence of the Klan would hurt their traditional role as social, political, and economic leaders of the county. They decried the Klan and their use of violence as hypocritical and un-American.⁵⁴

During the Democratic primary, the anti-Klan candidate Miriam "Ma" Ferguson defeated Robertson. Robertson's loss and similar defeats at the local level was symbolic of defeats the Klan would later face. Overt support for the Klan waned and the Klan was on the decline in Texas. Governor Ferguson proposed several anti-Klan laws, including an anti-mask law and publication of Klan membership. After an arduous local battle against the Klan, *The Marshall Messenger* signaled the triumph of anti-Klan advocates. Headlines read, "Convention Denounces The Klan," "Klan Considered Buried As Texas Political Faction," and "Funeral of Klan." According to one editorial, "The Ferguson caucus during the night was in the nature of a ceremony depicting the funeral pyree [sic] on which the Klan, as a political factor, was cremated." Once denunciations against the Klan appeared, many people felt more comfortable criticizing the terrorist organization. One editorial illustrated the disdain many Harrison County lo-

als felt towards the Klan. It proudly criticized the Klan's fears of Catholics and African-Americans, mocked Klan efforts to "put on a mask to protect womanhood," and ridiculed the hypocritical notion of enforcing the law by "putting a hood over his face instead of openly and fearlessly fighting wrong." Following the defeat of Robertson in the Democratic primary, Klan number 168 suffered a major setback and never rebounded. By 1925, then, mob violence became associated with the discredited Ku Klux Klan in Harrison County. From 1890 to 1920, whites in the county supported mob violence as it targeted African Americans who seemingly posed threats to white supremacy. However, as the KKK of the 1920s targeted whites as well as blacks, the support for extralegal violence from white locals waned and lynchings became a thing of the past.⁵⁵

Harrison County transformed from a bucolic frontier settlement into a county defined by economic growth and modernization. Accompanying this transformation, the nature of vigilante violence became increasingly racialized after Emancipation. African Americans in Harrison County faced the threat of mob violence throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite the looming threat of hostility, the black population continued to increase each decade from 1870 to 1930. Economic and educational opportunities for blacks outweighed the threat of violence as many chose to live like George Dawson and avoid trouble with whites. From 1870 to 1930 the local black population grew even more, by more than three hundred percent. Although not perfect, Harrison County continued to attract blacks to the county and keep them there.

As a regional phenomenon, southern lynchings peaked in the early 1890s and steadily declined throughout the next several decades. However, the trend in Harrison County is different. In the 1890s, white mobs lynched one African American and from 1900 to 1910 mobs lynched two African Americans. As the economy declined in the 1910s, white blamed much of the economic woes on blacks, and lynchings became more common as whites vented their frustration through violence. As the idea of economic independence dwindled and threat of increasing white tenancy loomed, local whites reclaimed their manhood through lynching. From 1910 to 1917, six African Americans died at the hands of a mob for offenses ranging from murder, assault, hog theft, and attempted robbery. The ability

of whites to provide for their families decreased, new ways to defend their families emerged, mostly in the form of community defense from alleged black criminals. In this climate, lynching grew in popularity and acceptance and local authorities proved unwilling or unable to protect blacks.

As the economy resurged in the 1920s, the economic condition of the county's whites improved and the need to vent frustrations through violence against blacks diminished. Thus, it appears that in Harrison County, whites were more prone to lynch blacks during times of economic hardship. This reflects the idea posited by Arthur Raper that, "periods of relative prosperity bring reduction in lynching and periods of depression cause an increase." The decline in the value of farm products means fewer jobs and the growing population further stressed this already tenuous situation. The competition for jobs pitted whites against blacks and as stated previously, whites blamed the poor farm conditions on blacks. As the economy rebounded, more jobs meant less competition and the competition between blacks and whites became less tenuous.⁵⁶

However, an improving economy was not the only reason why lynching declined during the 1920s. The acceptance of mob violence among the local city leaders faded away as the Ku Klux Klan expanded into Harrison County in the 1920s, and whites faced the threat of mob violence for the first time in many decades. The Klan regulated both black and white behaviors, and more importantly, threatened the influence of city leaders. Local whites faced political, social, and economic subordination at the hands of the Klan. The Klan pledged to use mob violence to promote their goals; however these goals, at times, ran counter to traditional city leaders'. This pitted city leaders against the Klan. As part of a larger effort to discredit the clandestine organization, city leaders condemned vigilante violence as a Klan tactic to impose their will on the county's whites. Attacks against the Klan and mob violence grew more vociferous and as the KKK became increasingly discredited, so too did vigilante violence. By the late 1920s, city leaders succeeded in discrediting the Klan, and in the process, ultimately eliminated mob violence from Harrison County.

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**Lone Star Lieutenant: Gertrude Watkins and the 1919
Referendum Campaign of the Texas Equal Suffrage Association**

By
KEVIN C. MOTL

It was February 1919, and Minnie Fisher Cunningham was running out of time. The culmination of four years of relentless effort, cobbled together far too often with a poverty of both funds and volunteers, now loomed but three short months away, and the President of the Texas Equal Suffrage Association (TESA) needed help. With the enthusiastic blessing of a governor recently elected thanks in no small part to Cunningham and her allies, the state legislature had in January unexpectedly set a referendum date of May 24 for the question of full enfranchisement for the women of Texas. Caught unawares, Cunningham scrambled to assemble what few resources she could in the hope of mounting something resembling a coherent campaign. On February 12, the TESA Executive Board gathered in Austin for strategic planning; there it authorized the creation of a Speakers' Bureau through which qualified advocates would canvass the state and, hopefully, shepherd Texas voters to the polls in support of the suffrage measure. Amateur hour was over; with but twelve weeks in which to make her case, Cunningham needed hardened veterans with the experience and the language to move her message. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) rose to meet that need, deploying over the next few weeks a cadre of polished activists with campaign experience from other states. For three months, these women would give Cunningham eyes and ears in the field, and in their work lay the best hope for woman suffrage in Texas.¹

On February 2, word came to Cunningham from Alice Ellington of Dallas that Arkansan Gertrude Watkins, a veteran suffrage activist and now NAWSA Field Organizer, might welcome the opportunity to convince Texans to support the woman franchise.² "She happens to be home just now," Ellington advised, "[and] was so afraid she would be sent far away before you had fully made plans for Texas."

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Cunningham immediately pressed Ellington for details, and sent a personal invitation to Watkins to join the Texas campaign. Watkins, whose bona fides included the organization of dozens of suffrage associations in her home state in 1917, proved as enthusiastic as she was qualified, replying, "Indeed, next to winning [Arkansas], I should like nothing better than to have a hand in helping to steer Texas into the full suffrage fold." While Ellington lauded Watkins's skill as a "good speaker of the modern school of conversational speaking," Watkins herself was more pointed with her assets: her southern identity; her familiarity with Texans' suffrage rights; and, her experience in circumnavigating a particularly toxic "enemy alien" clause that had been written into the language of the Texas referendum bill. All that remained was NAWSA's approval, which Cunningham secured after some modest confusion that threatened to send Watkins instead to Tennessee. Watkins arrived in Austin on March 1, 1919, a newly minted field commander in the mounting struggle for equal suffrage in the Lone Star State.³

While the historical reality of both the suffrage campaign in Texas, Arkansas, and the greater United States doubtless bears the mark of her activism, Gertrude Watkins and her exploits remain largely invisible within the historical record of the movement. Organized manuscript resources in her native state prove fruitless in giving some sense of her work. And yet, Watkins occupied a position sufficiently prominent to merit mention in a 1917 edition of NAWSA's *The Woman Citizen* periodical, which described her as an "able young organizer" who had been "active in state and national suffrage work for the last four years." She entered the suffrage campaign on the heels of extension work for the Y.W.C.A., where she found her efforts "to help create better conditions for working women" thwarted by political impotence.⁴ The earliest indicator of Watkins's engagement with the Arkansas campaign appears with the July 26, 1916 meeting of the Arkansas Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), at which she was chosen as one of four delegates from Little Rock to attend the NAWSA national convention in Atlantic City later that year.⁵ A. Elizabeth Taylor credits Watkins with organizing sixty local suffrage auxiliaries in Arkansas in a month's time in 1917, while the magisterial six-volume movement history edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Ida Husted Harper places Watkins in no fewer than five states as a field organizer

for NAWSA.⁶ In 1918 Watkins addressed attendees at the first annual meeting of the Arkansas Equal Suffrage Central Committee on “Organizing for Suffrage in Arkansas.”⁷

With this essay, I reconstruct a vignette of the suffrage activism of Gertrude Watkins in southeast Texas, and use her experiences to diagnose qualities unique to the rural electorate in the state, and that may have influenced the contours of the suffrage advocacy there. Such an investigation is long overdue, as the silence of the nonurban suffragist in the history of the suffrage movement continues to obscure our understanding of that movement as a political and cultural phenomenon. Historians to date have typically privileged cities in the published narrative of the southern suffrage campaign, and perhaps appropriately—manuscript sources there are voluminous, organized, and accessible. Yet, though historians may rightly identify the urban suffrage campaign as the decisive front in the regional or national movement, that understanding remains nevertheless incomplete. Indeed, few accounts of organized suffrage activism, particularly in the South, make visible the legions of suffragists and sympathizers who occupied physical and cultural spaces beyond the cityscape; the small-town and rural suffragists who comprised the preponderance of the foot soldiers in the campaign remain unknown and uncelebrated in the historical canon. Nor is a lament of their absence especially novel: twenty years have now passed since Elizabeth Hayes Turner urged suffrage historians to turn from the “lofty altitudes of state and regional politics” and scrutinize instead “the rise as well as the role and function of *local* [emphasis original] suffrage societies in the South—to try and discover if, in fact, the grass had any roots, and if so, how healthy they were, and whether they advanced or held back the greening of the general suffrage movement.”⁸

This call has to date gone largely unanswered; meanwhile, the history languishes. A narrative preoccupied with urban activism denies in historical memory the complexity that defined the suffrage movement in historical reality. This is about far more than the ongoing expectation of historians to fill gaps in the chronicle of events, though that certainly represents a necessary beginning. Absent a thorough integration of the full spectrum of suffragists, organizations, tactics, and rhetoric in play throughout the life of the

movement, our *understanding* remains inauthentic and incomplete—we cannot know the suffrage campaign in three dimensions. After all, we can confidently assume that the nonurban electorate was demographically, culturally, and politically distinct from its urban counterpart, and therefore offered a unique milieu in which to pursue such a provocative electoral reform. What's more, in the case of both Texas and Arkansas, the nonurban electorate comprised a sizeable majority of each state's population; their silence leaves critical questions unanswered. What, for example, do the demographic traits of nonurban suffrage advocates and their sympathizers reveal about the character and appeal of the movement? What was the nature and method of the opposition? What conclusions can be drawn from those tactics, arguments, and ideas that succeeded among certain constituencies throughout the state versus those that failed? Most importantly, in those polities where suffragists did convince the local electorate to support the expanded franchise, what ideas superseded the gender conventions typical of both the culture and the age, and what can we extrapolate from those dynamics about the nature of identity within and among these nonurban groups?

Alas, the tale of Gertrude Watkins abroad in Texas does not and cannot satisfy all of these questions. After all, the manuscript evidence we do have—in the form of correspondence between Watkins, her allies, and the state leadership (most notably, Cunningham and Jane Yelvington McCallum of the Austin auxiliary of the TESA)—offers but episodic glimpses into Watkins' activities, obstacles, and ideas. Watkins' counterparts and observers in the field do supplement her own accounts, but only obliquely, and without the expository detail that an historian would covet in reconstructing the events of the day. Despite these constraints, however, we must concede that glimpses win out over blindness, and while the limits of our sources restrict our interpretive possibilities, we can still expose the darkened byways of the past to new light, however dim the wattage. In this capacity, Gertrude Watkins and her contemporaries prove valuable docents in moving us toward a more thoughtful and more thorough treatment of the southern suffrage campaign.

The 1919 suffrage referendum represented the zenith of Texas politics that year, paired as it was with a prohibition measure that

would surely generate turnout. This was to the great advantage of the suffragists, who shrewdly capitalized upon the marriage of prohibition and suffrage to style the franchise as an act of moral agency that would project the feminine purity of American womanhood into the “degraded” politics of the day. It had come, however, only at great cost and from tireless labor on the part of suffrage leaders across the state. As President, Minnie Fisher Cunningham knew this cost perhaps better than any—since assuming the office in 1915, she had managed simultaneous state and federal amendment campaigns while teetering perpetually on the cusp of organizational bankruptcy, confronting prolonged stretches of outright apathy among the very constituency she sought to empower, and staring down opposition flush with influence, visibility, and wealth.

The 1919 referendum had also crystallized beyond the ability of the TESA and its auxiliaries to shape it. Texas suffragists scored a strategic victory in the spring of 1918 when, in exchange for the support of the woman vote against impeached ex-Governor “Farmer Jim” Ferguson, acting Governor William Hobby signed into law a bill granting Texas women the primary vote. Texas being a Democratic stronghold, the right to vote in the party primary was a broad step toward full suffrage, so foregone was the outcome of general elections. Texas women were good to their word, and Hobby was easily elected that summer. In securing this right, however, the women of Texas immediately captured the attention of interest groups who now viewed the woman vote as a potentially decisive factor in their own ambitions. Prohibitionists in particular saw *deus ex machina* in the newly-enfranchised women, and pushed both houses of the state legislature to demur on the federal suffrage amendment in favor of a state referendum for the full franchise.⁹

Cunningham and her allies had already worked meticulously at the state Democratic convention in September 1918 to derail any prospects for a state initiative, opting instead to pursue NAWSA’s “Winning Plan” for passage of a federal amendment, which had been gaining momentum in Washington. The political calculus was clear: all previous attempts at suffrage referenda in the South had met with ignominious defeat, and failure in Texas could jeopardize critical swing votes in Congress. This prospect was not lost on the anti-suffrage forces in the state, who compounded the difficulty of

the situation by securing an early election date, thereby bringing the referendum campaign into direct conflict with an upcoming Liberty Loan drive.¹⁰

Cunningham was caught fast. NAWSA's master strategy was known only to President Carrie Chapman Catt and her inner circle; explaining it openly to Texas suffragists would surely deliver NAWSA to its enemies elsewhere. The conflict moreover threatened fratricide within the TESA, from whom Cunningham had already wrangled a resolution against a state amendment. Yet, how could the suffragists publicly reject an overture for full voting rights and not unravel their growing support among men and women who believed—naively, Cunningham thought—the success of the Hobby campaign indicated strong prospects for approval? Cunningham attempted a delaying tactic, arranging for her allies in Austin to introduce bills setting the referendum date for the 1920 general election. By then, she hoped, the federal amendment would pass and render the state question moot. These maneuvers were thwarted, however, as overconfidence among citizens and legislators alike generated an irrepressible momentum toward an early election date.¹¹

The collapse of the federal amendment in the U. S. Senate generated a perfect storm, which materialized when Hobby, in a January 1919 message to the legislature, called for a vote on full woman suffrage that year. The nativist hysteria touched off by the First World War and the patriotic fervor generated by women's voluntarism on the home front gave the suffrage amendment rhetorical and political heft; Hobby called for a suffrage bill enfranchising women while disenfranchising resident aliens.¹² This final addendum all but gilded the political irony: the women who stood to gain from the referendum could not vote for it, while the minority groups who stood to lose the franchise could easily vote against it. A furious Cunningham, fresh from a conclave with the NAWSA leadership in D.C., returned to Texas in February and, with the blessing of NAWSA President Carrie Chapman Catt, determined to both put the state amendment over the top and make Hobby pay for his lack of vision.¹³

Watkins was deployed into this fray as a member of the TESA Speaker's Bureau and Field Secretary for the state's Fourteenth

Senate District, a ten-county stretch of land huddled along the Sabine River in the easternmost part of the state. Bookending the district in the north was the historic city of Nacogdoches; in the south, the oil boomtown of Beaumont—easily the largest metropolitan area in the district, with an urban population in excess of forty thousand. Between these poles, a population of over 200,000, over sixty percent of whom lived in rural communities; six of the ten counties boasted no urban residents whatsoever in 1919.¹⁴ Awaiting Watkins there was Lillian Knox of Hemphill, herself only recently returned from a stay in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where her ailing husband Hiram had taken the waters to fend off a stubborn case of influenza.¹⁵ In conjunction with Liba Peshakova, a South Dakota suffrage campaign veteran and Senate District Finance Chair, Watkins planned to raise five thousand dollars while saturating the district with pro-suffrage literature.¹⁶ Prospects for the field were dim; of the several organizers canvassing Texas on behalf of the suffrage referendum, Watkins inherited one of the most adverse political environments in the state.

Through Watkins's irregular correspondence with the TESA state leadership, we can piece together at least some portion of her work in Texas' fourteenth Senate District. In April, a timely boon appeared in the form of NAWSA Honorary President Anna Howard Shaw, who agreed to tour the state and employ her formidable presence on behalf of the TESA. While Shaw's itinerary generally favored Texas' metropolitan centers, it nevertheless gave Watkins the opportunity to promote and feature a charismatic suffrage leader with a celebrated national profile. Shaw was scheduled to speak in Beaumont on April 17 and 18, and from there a final stop further north in Palestine. Watkins intended an ambitious agenda for Shaw's visit, including a local reception and parade; both, however, went unrealized at the urging of Cunningham, who curtailed Shaw's itinerary on the basis of Shaw's frail constitution. Though limited, Shaw's canvass was revealing. A few days after Shaw's visit, Watkins intimated that, despite a "nice conference in [the afternoon and a] splendid little night meeting," the local women were "so apathetic that I was uncertain, up to the very day, just how every thing would go."¹⁷

As a member of the TESA Speakers' Bureau, Watkins made a regular tour of the district and offered tactical advice and encourage-

ment to local associations and general audiences throughout. At the invitation of the Nacogdoches Equal Suffrage Association, Watkins spoke in early April at the Nacogdoches County courthouse. There she urged her all-female audience to use their sway to compel the men of their community to support the equal franchise on May 24. Watkins was followed on the eve of the election by another prominent Arkansas suffragist, Florence Cotnam, who entreated a sizeable audience of local voters to “make the emancipation of womankind complete.”¹⁸ These engagements appear to have had an energizing effect on local suffragists—especially the women of Nacogdoches, whom Watkins later described as “splendid” women who “deserved to win certainly.”¹⁹

Watkins’s adventures as a suffrage activist in Texas also supply useful insights into the dynamics of the 1919 campaign. First, Watkins’s correspondence reveals the difficulty in raising funds in a hostile region. Watkins came to Texas in March with intentions to raise five thousand dollars in promotion of the May referendum. By April 8, she reported that she had to date only raised \$1150, and was decidedly pessimistic about her prospects to reach her original goal. District Finance Chair Liba Peshakova capitalized upon the enthusiasm surrounding Dr. Shaw’s visit to scrounge up an additional \$350 later that month, but Watkins conceded “its [*sic*] hard to get in [Beaumont].”²⁰

Another potentially decisive complication in the suffrage advocacy effort illuminated by Watkins’s correspondence is the chronic apathy that hamstrung leaders’ efforts to recruit dedicated and energetic volunteers. In the early weeks of the referendum campaign, NAWSA recommended a petition drive to demonstrate to both lawmakers and the general public the demand among Texas women for the right to the full franchise. This had two potential benefits: first, it could generate pressure on the male electorate to respond to women’s demands—or more precisely, husbands to respond to the demands of their wives—particularly in light of their service to the war effort; and second, it offered a substantive and empirical refutation to opposition claims that Texas women did not want the ballot, and that the campaign had been cooked up by a handful of unfeminine malcontents at the behest of outside agitators.²¹

In part, the ability of field organizers to recruit reliable volunteers was compromised by the TESA's empty coffers and NAWSA's inability to underwrite the campaign beyond Cunningham's salary as president.²² Watkins complained of the effects of unpaid volunteers on the petition effort early on: "In regard to petitions—since you are so emphatic about not paying girls to circulate them—it means that our [district] will have 2,000 women's names instead of 5,000, as we had hoped." The petition drive moreover allowed Watkins to bring to bear her experience and perspective from Arkansas and elsewhere: "There is so little interest in getting petitions done—and it is different after women have actually voted. Quite naturally they are bored to tears having to use the 'indirect influence' of a petition."²³

Frustration toward suffragist inertia percolated up to the putative leaders of local auxiliaries or county campaigns. Though Watkins secured Chairmen in eight of ten counties by early April, not all proved equally competent to the task. Shortly after her arrival in the district, Watkins delivered a rather unvarnished opinion of Mrs. F. J. Calhoun, Chairman of Jefferson County: "Whoever wished Mrs. Calhoun off on us as a County Chairman should be shot—[and] I speak for the job of killing her. She will give neither money nor time, [and] she has plenty of both." A sympathetic Cunningham replied, "I am afraid if some of us yielded to our feelings there would be quite a shooting at sunrise on the morning of the 25th of May if the suffrage amendment fails to carry." Irritation gave way to resignation by April 8, as Watkins complained, "Mrs. Calhoun is a poor excuse—though really, there is no one except Mrs. Bradley, who positively refuses to do another thing for [suffrage], in the least interested enough to be of much help."²⁴ Instability of leadership at the local level was an acute problem, not only for the reliability of the lines of communication between the state and local leaders at a critical hour, but also because even a brief interruption in the active leadership of the movement could yield a disproportionate decline in public interest in the cause.

Finally, Watkins's correspondence casts light into the shadowy character of the opposition to woman suffrage active in her district, and at least one measure of the extremes to which suffrage opponents

were willing to go to thwart electoral reform in the state. In a letter sent on the day of the referendum election, Watkins described in Liberty County "slandorous attacks on the womanhood of Texas in his Forum," thereby invoking the specter of "Fergusonism" and the legacy of former Governor James "Farmer Jim" Ferguson. A Temple businessman with a charismatic presence and a talent for striking a populist tone on the stump, Ferguson first entered Texas politics in March 1914 on an anti-prohibitionist platform. His outsider image and folksy oratory catapulted him into the governor's seat, where he built not so much an administration as an empire, projecting his influence throughout both the state legislature and the state Democratic party machinery. He proved particularly strong in nonurban counties in Texas, building on that advantage to crush his primary opponent during his 1916 reelection campaign.²⁵ Throughout his gubernatorial career, Ferguson remained a steadfast ally to business and liquor interests, and a bitter enemy to prohibition and woman suffrage. Ferguson's cronies thwarted repeated attempts to move equal suffrage bills through the state legislature before 1917, and Ferguson outmaneuvered prohibitionist allies to the suffrage cause to block the inclusion of a pro-suffrage plank in the state Democratic platform in 1916.²⁶

With his audacious attempt in 1917 to bring the University of Texas to heel through intimidation, faculty and administrative purges, and a veto of university appropriations, however, Ferguson inaugurated his own political decline. His assault on the state's flagship public university united students, faculty, alumni, and a broad majority of Texans in bitter opposition to his administration. Ferguson's opponents soon unearthed financial improprieties sufficiently egregious to merit impeachment proceedings in the state House in an August special session. That body brought twenty-one articles of impeachment against Ferguson, and managers were dispatched to the state Senate to prepare for trial, when Ferguson escaped conviction by resigning from office in September. The Senate convicted Ferguson in absentia, and forbade him from ever again holding "any office of honor, trust or profit under the State of Texas."²⁷

Impeachment did little to deter Ferguson's ambition, as he began

in November 1917 a “campaign for ‘vindication’” by personally editing and publishing a propaganda organ, the *Ferguson Forum*, designed to sustain the support of his electoral base. The first issue of the weekly *Forum* appeared on November 8, 1917, and ran almost continuously until 1935. The “Ferguson for Rum,” as it was known to Ferguson’s enemies, gained quick currency among his supporters. A subscription advertisement in the *Forum* from February 1918 crowed that the paper had subscribers in 233 of the 248 counties in the state, and circulated twenty thousand copies each week. Later claims cited a readership exceeding one hundred thousand Texans.²⁸

The readership of the *Forum* comprised Ferguson’s deeply loyal constituency—tenant farmers, urban labor, and anti-prohibitionists. As late as 1924, Ferguson remained “strong among rural voters, who...never read anything but the *Ferguson Forum*.” This was particularly true for the piney-woods region of East Texas, described by Norman Brown as “a red hot Ferguson bed” of Texans “dyed in the wool on Fergusonism.”²⁹ Ferguson’s support, however, defied geographical limits; though its authenticity is rightly questioned, correspondence to the *Forum*’s “Letters From Loyal Texans” (after 1918 entitled “Where the Voters Decide”) column represented the entire state. All, of course, subscribed to Ferguson’s provincial conservatism, and all were beguiled by his down-home charisma. One Mount Pleasant admirer perhaps best explained the rural view of “Farmer Jim,” declaring Ferguson “the best friend the farmer ever has had in the governor’s office.”³⁰

When, in April 1918, Ferguson upended the Democratic gubernatorial primary by defiantly declaring his candidacy for governor against incumbent William Hobby, the *Forum* added a new dimension to its agitprop directed specifically at suffragists and the woman vote in rural Texas. The previous December, the *Forum* introduced a reader named “Sally Jane Spottswood,” allegedly a schoolteacher from a modest Texas hamlet by the name of “Pine Hollow,” and a Ferguson devotee. By January, Spottswood had become a regular columnist, treating the question of equal suffrage with Ferguson’s trademark folksy style and naked opportunism. Between January and August 1918, Spottswood assumed multiple positions on suffrage—each in direct relation to the potential of the

woman vote to benefit Ferguson's political fortunes. In the weeks before the Democratic primary between Ferguson and Hobby, Spottswood rejoiced in the growing number of female voters registered statewide; ironically, by the eve of the election, the *Forum* had become one of the state's most vocal proponents of the woman vote. Spottswood instead sought to divide the woman voter bloc by class, warning Texas farmwomen to avoid the "pink tea" city women, "who would rather nurse a poodle dog than a baby."³¹ The honeymoon ended, however, with Ferguson's landslide defeat in the July 27 primary. An indignant Spottswood declared primary suffrage for women unconstitutional, concluding that "now...is the best time to stop it all." Ferguson himself condemned the "liars" who supported Hobby against him, proclaimed that Texas women did not want to vote, and that he would vote against it himself in the May referendum. A final *Forum* column in the month preceding the election warned that equal rights for women would precipitate the collapse of human civilization and the undoing of God's "divine arrangement."³²

In Watkins's view, this was the spirit trafficking among voters in her district on Election Day. She claimed, incorrectly, that eighty percent of the vote in San Augustine County had gone to Ferguson in 1918 (the actual figure was sixty-nine percent), but her detection of the long shadow of Fergusonism appears nevertheless accurate. In February, Lillian Knox had cautioned Cunningham that her district had "ten hard counties," and that it "went for Ferguson and they are going to fight us," but determined to get it organized anyway. In fact, six of the ten counties in Senate District 14 supported Ferguson's defiant and arguably illegal candidacy in 1918, and three of those—Newton, Sabine, and San Augustine—had delivered strong majorities above sixty percent. Official returns for the May 24 suffrage referendum reveal the loss of the district overall, with seven of the ten member counties voting against the woman franchise. Of those seven, five had also favored Ferguson in the 1918 primary, and all featured overwhelmingly rural populations—only Nacogdoches County boasted any urban residents whatsoever, and that amounted to less than a sixth of the total county population. Ferguson's influence was surely not the lone factor in determining electoral outcomes on May 24—rain likely blunted turnout in the northern

part of the district—but a strong correlative relationship certainly seems plausible in light of Watkins's and Knox's anecdotal claims.³³

Watkins's account supplies further evidence of the character of the opposition in the field. A host of "dreadful scurulous" [*sic*] anti-suffrage literature had been distributed to the men of the district. The suffragists had countered with "10,000 letters [and] in each one was a piece of our [literature] to try and offset even a little—the effect of the Anti's. The opposition in San Augustine and Sabine is really bitter." The suffragists had "waged a rather vigorous campaign" in Lillian Knox's home county of Sabine. For their trouble, however, Watkins reported "there was an attempt to burn Mrs. Knox's house. Isn't that just too vicious for words?" If attempted arson wasn't sufficiently demoralizing, Watkins observed on the day of the election "a few stragglng men pass by on their way to vote. One has just announced to a group standing under cover of a roof that he ain't ashamed to say that he was going to vote a'gin the women and for the Wets—[and] his remark seems to meet with the approval of his hearers." None of this dampened Watkins's spirits, however, as she professed a "whole heart full" and "every wish for Victory" to Cunningham in her report.³⁴

Victory, however, eluded Watkins and her allies that day. Watkins reported light voting in all counties, and some modest irregularities in election protocol, namely, "Some of our boxes were not opened all day long...[and] some closed early...but as the sentiment was friendly to our amend. [and] as we won (though the vote was light) we made little of this." Indeed, Watkins was most enthusiastic about the fate of the referendum in her district and the state, both of which she believed to be won in a "mighty close call." She correctly identified Jefferson, Hardin, and Orange Counties as victorious for suffrage, declared Sabine and San Augustine too close to call, and wrongly predicted a win in Jasper County. Statewide, however, the suffrage referendum fell to defeat by a margin of 25,000 votes out of 300,000 ballots cast. As the official returns became public, Watkins's jubilation took a sour turn. "I felt like someone had struck me a terrific blow between the eyes," she lamented to Cunningham, "when I read of our loss this morning—for that, I'm afraid, it will prove to be." Watkins praised Cunningham's leadership, but spared

no venom for those who did prevail in the referendum: "...I must say I have a perfect contempt for that sanctimonious, hypocritical bunch of Prohibitionists. I can almost see some of the 'Good Church' people fairly licking their chops over the outcome of the Election."³⁵ These sorrows proved but temporary, of course, as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment cleared Congress on June 4. Governor Hobby called for a special legislative session to consider ratification on June 23, and the amendment swept through the state House with impassioned but marginal opposition. Suffrage allies broke an "anti" filibuster in the state Senate on June 27, and the following day, Texas became the first southern state, and the ninth in the country, to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.³⁶

Through the eyes and efforts of Gertrude Watkins, an experienced Arkansas suffragist, we get some sense, however incomplete, of the nature of suffrage advocacy in the largely rural region of Texas to which she was assigned. We can reasonably conclude from her missives to state headquarters that cajoling local women of standing to campaign on behalf of suffrage was often an uphill battle, and yet a necessary one, as women of status and social capital were necessary to offset accusations of suffrage as a fifth column for free love, socialism, and the "de-sexing" of southern womanhood. Herein lay one of the decisive aspects of the 1919 campaign—maintaining continuity and consistency of local leadership during a truncated endeavor, and Watkins struggled to do so in her district. Watkins's experiences also demonstrate the problem of using unpaid volunteers for advocacy work—particularly the time-intensive, door-to-door labor of gathering petition signatures. Watkins argued, however implicitly, for paid volunteers in the understanding that they would be better motivated to meet campaign objectives; TESA's financial liabilities, however, precluded any such possibility, which may have diminished the efficacy of Watkins's efforts in her district. Beyond question, however, we see from Watkins's campaign the adverse environment in which many suffragists had to work, and the violent extremes suffrage opponents would employ to resist change. Likewise, in a single-party state, we are reminded from Watkins's correspondence of the ongoing power of personality among rural Texans still in thrall to an otherwise disgraced demagogue. That Ferguson could successfully appeal to the sympathies of East Texans

through traditional gender constructs suggests that those constructs retained potent currency among male voters in the region.

Thus in scrutiny of Gertrude Watkins do the dynamics of the Texas campaign come into somewhat sharper relief, and given of the many obstacles the suffragists faced in their endeavors, the fact that they scored so many victories throughout the state impresses even more in retrospect. More work remains, of course, before we can responsibly say that we have an authentic grasp of the southern suffrage movement in its many intricacies, but a thorough inquiry into local activism like Watkins's 1919 campaign is a step in the right direction. Did these same challenges and obstacles obtain elsewhere in the South, including Watkins' native state of Arkansas? How did suffragists respond to them, and what do their victories and failures tell us about the nature of the southern electorate on matters of gender and political power in the early twentieth century? How can we enrich our historical understanding of national suffrage activism with this new knowledge? These questions deserve answers, and all women who fought for political equality deserve to have their stories told. For her part, Watkins was grateful to have had the opportunity to join the suffrage battle in Texas, expressing her affection and admiration for Cunningham in one of her final missives, and declaring, "it was a great joy to have been a part of the Texas History."³⁷

Notes

1 Cunningham to Senate District Chairmen, Feb. 27, 1919, Folder 1, Box 21, Jane Yelvington McCallum Papers (Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Austin, Texas; hereinafter cited as JYM); Nettie R. Shuler to Cunningham, Feb. 20, 1919, Folder 7, Box 21, JYM.

2 Watkins was also the daughter of Claibourne Watkins, a co-founder in 1879 of the Medical Department of the Arkansas Industrial University, now the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. See Max L. Baker and Fred O. Henker, "Claibourne Watkins (1844-1908)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture Online* (<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2931>), accessed February 15, 2013.

3 Watkins agreed to come to Texas for a monthly compensation of one hundred dollars plus expenses, a fee supplied in full by Lillian (Mrs. Hiram) Knox of Hemphill, who also served as Chairman for Senate District 14 during the campaign. See Cunningham to Knox, Feb. 14, 1919, Folder 4, Box 24, JYM; and Cunningham to Knox, Feb. 28, 1919, Folder 4, Box 24, JYM. On Watkins' qualifications, interest, and availability, see Ellington to Cunningham, Feb. 2, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, Minnie Fisher Cunningham Papers (University of Houston Library Special Collections and Archives, Houston, Texas; hereinafter MFC); Cunningham to Gertrude Watkins, Feb. 7, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Ellington to Cunningham, Feb. 10, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Watkins to Cunningham, Feb. 11, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Cunningham to Nettie Shuler, Feb. 17, 1919; Watkins to Cunningham, Feb. 17, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; and Shuler to Cunningham, Feb. 18, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC.

4 Mrs. Sam Worrell, "Two Interesting Arkansas Women," from *The Woman Citizen* Vol. 1, No. 11 (Aug. 11, 1917), 184.

5 AWSA Minutes, Jul. 26, 1916, Arkansas Woman's Suffrage Association Records (Loc. 1455) (Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville).

6 A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 15 (Spring 1956): 38. Watkins was dispatched as a field organizer to New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and West Virginia, in addition to her organizing work in Arkansas and Texas. See Ida Husted Harper, et al., ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 6 Vols. (National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), Apple iTunes E-Book, VI: 629, 712, 766, 859, 1010.

7 "First Annual Meeting of The Arkansas Equal Suffrage Central Committee" Program, Folder 2, Box 6, Series 6, South by Southwest Collection (MC971) (Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, AR), 6.

8 Elizabeth Hayes Turner, "'White-Gloved Ladies' and 'New Women' in the Texas Woman Suffrage Movement," in *Southern Women: Histories and Identities*, ed. Virginia Bernhard, et al. (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 155-156, 129-130. More recently, Elna C. Green has complained of a "nearly exclusive attention on the state and regional leadership of the southern suffrage movement," and the resulting "distorted picture of suffragism in the region." Rejecting claims that the traits of the movement's leadership defined all suffragists, Green argues instead that local suffrage activists were "more typical." See Elna

C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), xvii.

9 Judith N. McArthur and Harold L. Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham: A Suffragist's Life in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 61-62, 75; Ida Husted Harper, et al., ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 6 Vols. (New York: Arno Press, 1969), VI: 639. On the prohibitionist push for a state amendment, see Walter L. Buenger, *The Path to a Modern South: Northeast Texas between Reconstruction and the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 180.

10 McArthur and Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham*, 75; Harper, et al., ed., *History of Woman Suffrage*, VI: 639.

11 McArthur and Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham*, 76-78; Texas Legislature, House, *House Journal*, 36th Leg., Reg. Sess., 7.

12 Texas Legislature, House, *House Journal*, 36th Leg., Reg. Sess., 56-57.

13 McArthur and Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham*, 80; Catt to Cunningham, Jan. 23, 1919, Folder 5, Box 21, JYM.

14 The district comprised Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine, and Tyler Counties. Population data obtained from the Historical Census Browser (<http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.htm>), accessed February 7, 2013. Published by the University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center.

15 Knox to Cunningham, Feb. 24, 1919, Folder 4, Box 21, JYM.

16 Watkins to Cunningham, Mar. 5, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC.

17 Cunningham to Watkins, Mar. 27, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Shaw to Cunningham, Apr. 17, 1919, Folder 9, Box 25, JYM; Watkins to Cunningham, Apr. 22, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4 MFC.

18 *Daily Sentinel* (Nacogdoches, Tex.), Apr. 2, 1919, and May 24, 1919, quoted in Jennifer Baugh Hancock, "Society Suffragists: Women's Struggle for the Ballot in Rural East Texas" (M.A. thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1999), 113-114.

19 Watkins to Cunningham, May 27, 1919, Folder 5, Box 23, JYM.

20 Watkins to Cunningham, Apr. 8, 1919, Folder 4, Box 7, MFC; Watkins to Cunningham, Apr. 22, 1919, Folder 4, Box 7, MFC.

21 Carrie Chapman Catt personally urged Cunningham to focus on petitioning for the referendum campaign. See Catt to Cunningham, Jan. 23, 1919, Folder 5, Box 21, JYM.

22 Ibid. Catt offered to subsidize Cunningham's salary from the national so that Cunningham could rightly claim that she, like the many volunteers now working for no pay throughout the state, was earning nothing from TESA funds for her labor.

23 Watkins to Cunningham, Mar. 11, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC.

24 On Watkins's endeavors to find county chairmen, see Watkins to Cunningham, Apr. 8, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC. On Calhoun, see Watkins to Cunningham, Mar. 11, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Cunningham to Watkins, Mar. 13, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; and Watkins to Cunningham, Apr. 8, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC.

25 See "Election Returns from All Counties," *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), Aug. 8, 1914, and "Complete Returns by Counties of the July 22 Primary Election as Officially Compiled," *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Tex.), Aug. 7, 1916.

26 "Ferguson Heads Delegation to National Convention," *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), May 25, 1916; "Use Steam Roller to Expedite Vote for Committeeman," *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), May 25, 1916; and "Antis Play Shrewd Game to Victory," *San Antonio Express*, May 25, 1916.

27 The entire impeachment affair is exhaustively chronicled in Louis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: University of Texas, 1973), 185-221.

28 Norman D. Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 97. Unverified claims to the escalating circulation of the *Forum* are found in *Ferguson Forum*, Feb. 14, 1918; Editorial, *Ferguson Forum*, Mar. 28, 1918; and Editorial, *Ferguson Forum*, October 24, 1918.

29 Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, 307-308.

30 "Letters from Loyal Texans," *Ferguson Forum*, Jan. 3, 1918.

31 Spottswood's initial letter appeared in "Letters from Loyal Texans," *Ferguson Forum*, Dec. 27, 1917, and her first column was "We Need Hands," *Ferguson Forum*, Jan. 10, 1918. There is some reason to suspect that Spottswood was Ferguson himself, as the community of "Pine Hollow" is conspicuously absent in the historical record of the state. The

"pink tea" quote is found in "Hobby's Contempt for Woman Suffrage Bill as Shown By Record Of the Texas Senate," *Ferguson Forum*, May 23, 1918. Other columns typical of Spottswood's work include "To Every Woman in Texas, Urban and Suburban," *Ferguson Forum*, Jun. 20, 1918; "To the Women of Texas Who Will Vote in Primary" *Ferguson Forum*, Jun. 27, 1918; Editorial, *Ferguson Forum*, Jul. 11, 1918; "Women of Texas; Vote!" *Ferguson Forum*, Jul. 25, 1918.

32 See "Is It Constitutional for Women to Vote?" *Ferguson Forum*, Aug. 1, 1918. Ferguson's reaction to the primary returns is in "200,000 Liars Running Loose in Texas," *Ferguson Forum*, Aug. 1, 1918; "Woman Suffrage," *Ferguson Forum* (Temple, Tex.), Apr. 10, 1919; and "Peril of 'Equal Rights' for Women," *Ferguson Forum* (Temple, Tex.) Apr. 17, 1919.

33 Watkins to Cunningham, May 24, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Knox to Cunningham, Feb. 24, 1919, Folder 4, Box 21, JYM. 1918 Primary Election returns are found in "Complete Returns Primary Election," *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), Aug. 11, 1918. May 24 Referendum returns are in Texas Legislature, House, *House Journal*, 36th Leg., 1st and 2nd Called Sess., 442-445.

34 Watkins to Cunningham, May 24, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC.

35 Watkins to Cunningham, May 26, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Watkins to Cunningham, Jun. 8, 1919, Folder 7, Box 4, MFC; Texas Legislature, House, *House Journal*, 36th Leg., 1st and 2nd Called Sess., 445; Watkins to Cunningham, May 27, 1919, Folder 5, Box 23, JYM. Watkins reported that polling sites in Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange were "never opened," while polling sites elsewhere were not opened until early afternoon and closed early. She estimated that it cost the suffragists "several hundred votes in our three friendly towns." Other voting irregularities occurred in East Texas counties where, not coincidentally, Fergusonism still held local sway. In twenty-eight counties, ballots listed the amendments in a different order, many opposing votes were very slow to return, and reports of unguarded ballot boxes proliferated. See McArthur and Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham*, 82.

36 McArthur and Smith, *Minnie Fisher Cunningham*, 84; Harper, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, VI: 642-643. The activity in the Senate documented in Texas Legislature, Senate, *Senate Journal*, 36th Leg., 2nd Called Sess., 24-29, 44-45, 51.

37 Watkins to Cunningham, May 27, 1919, Folder 5, Box 23, JYM.

**A Lordly Air of Independence: Culture and the Coming of
Modern Banking to Texas, ca. 1880-1920**

By

BRIAN NORRIS

A 1904 pamphlet from Coggin Bros. & Ford, bankers in Brownwood, Texas, had a simple and self-evident title: "Banking Made Plain: What a Bank Is, What a Banks Does, How To Deal With It, and How It Will Help You" (See figure 1). Its authors aimed to explain this enigmatic modern institution to readers who were just awakening from the slumber of an agricultural Texas: "Many people imagine that the details of banking are enveloped in mystery... Don't be disappointed if, when you visit the bank the second time, the officers and clerks do not seem to recognize you; remember that since your last visit they have transacted business with many hundreds of people and have had to exercise the same care that they manifest in dealing with you."¹

The Coggin Bros. & Ford pamphlet marked an important time in Texas history, the transition from early forms of merchant credit to complex modern banking institutions. From the 1880s through the 1920s, banks increasingly displaced credit merchants as the lenders of choice for Texas farmers. Though there was no singular event marking the beginning or end of the most active period of transition, the founding of the Texas Bankers Association (TBA) in Lampasas in 1885 is a reasonable indicator of the beginning, and the transition was largely completed by the time a 1914 study estimated that only 4% of all Texas farmers had never received a loan from a modern bank.² The Dallas Federal Reserve was also founded in 1914, but many important local social changes in banking practices were already well under way by then.

Historians have documented the transformation of the southern economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from a traditional to

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a modern economy and the transition from merchant credit to bank credit that was a part of the broader transformation.³ Some have paid special attention to the role of the general store and credit merchants as they existed before this transition.⁴ Historians and business writers have documented the development of formal banking institutions Texas.⁵ While many of these institutional histories use a vocabulary from economics, scholars starting in the 1980s became increasingly interested in the concept of culture.⁶

This paper has three goals. It will attempt to place the literature on the transition from merchant credit to banking credit in Texas into a broader comparative context. This discussion is organized thematically rather than strictly chronologically because the transition from traditional to modern societies proceeds at different rates across a landscape and with much overlap between traditional and modern institutions. As distinguished legal scholar Henry Maine wrote in 1876, "Sometimes the past is the present."⁷ Second, this paper will attempt to make a modest contribution in primary source documentation and provide a novel interpretation of some known sources. Third, it will provide a research note on the rapidity with which modern credit institutions developed in North and West Texas compared to East Texas and highlight the potential role of culture alongside material and legal factors in explaining the faster emergence of modern banking in the former. The evidence suggests that Texas had a cultural tradition that was supportive of modern credit institutions, though the presence of this culture might have varied throughout the state.

There are several legal milestones that document the rise of formal banking in Texas. In 1822 José Felix Trespalacios, colonel of the imperial armies of Mexico and political chief of the Province of Texas, granted the first charter for a bank in Texas, the *Banco Nacional de Texas*. The bank was an attempt to issue paper money backed by the irregular but ultimately unailing specie shipments for the payment of Mexican troops at San Antonio. The army hoped that a regular pay schedule would reduce the drunken binge celebrations that troops tended to have on their intermittent paydays. The scheme did not work.⁸ Another milestone was reached when state banks were addressed by the state constitution. The Constitution of the Republic of Texas in 1836 was mute on the topic of banks, but the state

constitutions of 1845, 1861, 1866 and 1876 prohibited state-chartered banks. Despite these general prohibitions, there were some banks with formal permission to operate. In 1835, the Galveston entrepreneur Samuel May Williams obtained a nontransferable charter for the *Banco de Comercio y Agricultura* from the Congress of the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas at Monclova. The bank operated from 1847 until 1859. The Constitution of 1869 offered a window for state-chartered banks to operate before they were again prohibited in 1876, and for two years after the National Bank Act of 1863, Thomas H. McMahan and other investors created the First National Bank of Galveston in 1865 (See figure 2). In 1905, the State Bank Law definitively allowed state-chartered banks, and for a brief period state-chartered banks, national banks and private banks, which had existed in important numbers since the 1860s, coexisted in Texas. Avery Carlson estimated that in 1904-6 there were 197 private banks, 157 state banks and 524 national banks.⁹ The period of private banking ended in 1923 when Texas legislation mandated that all new banks have either a state or national charter, thus giving Texas its modern system of state and national banks. A 'state' or 'national' bank in this context was a private endeavor that received a government charter.

Sociologically, however, credit can be defined as any exchange of goods presently possessed against the promise of a future transfer of disposal over utilities, no matter what these future utilities may be.¹⁰ This expansive definition of credit encompasses a broad range of human interactions across different epochs. For instance, in Texas in the 1910s, a tenant farmer could go to the nearest dry goods merchant in January and arrange "to be carried" for his necessities—i.e., food and tools needed for maintenance on the house and for the harvest of cotton—until the following October.¹¹ Equally, a Zacatecas miner in the first three decades of the 20th century might pawn his party costume to make ends meet for one week.¹² Other informal actions also fit this sociological definition of credit, as in El Paso in the 1950s, when one modern banker negotiated a bad check, which essentially constituted an unsecured loan.¹³

Modern banks in Texas evolved out of the antecedent lending practices associated with dry goods merchants in a mainly agricultural 19th century Texas. Texas was agricultural through the end of the

19th century and beyond. Only 17% of the Texas population lived in urban areas in 1900, and it was not until the 1950 census that a greater percentage of Texans were recorded as living in urban areas than in rural areas.¹⁴ One observer in Texas in 1889 described the evolution from agricultural merchant to modern banking: "First we have a general store and so-called Bank combined... Finally this combination may evolve into a small private Bank..."¹⁵

Merchant credit represented an older, more concrete form of interaction among Texans living in a traditional agricultural society. In traditional societies, the most important social unit was the extended family or a similar tight-knit group, which itself constituted a small civil society performing political, economic (e.g., credit), welfare, security, religious and other social functions.¹⁶ For instance, one Texas merchant in 1915 described his intimate interactions with his clients saying, "Several years ago when I was losing heavily on farm accounts, I went over my books and found that many customers were buying \$50 or \$75 worth of goods in January or February. I went over the list of articles bought and found that they included many things which the buyer did not need or could do without and I quit letting him buy such things."¹⁷

There are two traditions in describing the interactions between dry goods merchants and farmers in the 19th century. The work of Pulitzer Prize-winning Steven Hahn represents one influential intellectual tradition that emphasizes the adversarial and self-interested nature of interactions between relatively monolithic merchant and farmer classes in the South, hereafter referred to as the class-based interpretation. Yeoman farmers of the Georgia upcountry from 1850-90 chose to engage in barter trade with one another rather than accept the abusive terms offered by merchants. Farmers could use the court system to seek redress against merchants. For example, farmer Thomas Campbell of Carroll County had bound himself to the merchant Gallington Coke for the sum of \$40 during the early 1850s. But by 1855, when the debt remained unpaid, Campbell sued under the 1841 Act for Relief of Honest Debtors and a court awarded Campbell \$20 principal, \$1.60 interest, and \$6.56 for the cost of the litigation.¹⁸

There is some evidence to support the class-based interpretation of farmer/merchant relations in Texas. For instance, in 1915 a 60 year-old dairy farmer in Smith County said, "The power of the credit

merchants is far-reaching and very few farmers are able to escape paying toll to them... The credit merchants own many farms, and practice a like system of robbery on their tenants."¹⁹ Around the same time, a former grocery merchant near Tyler said that on one occasion a merchant, acting as the middleman for the export of farmers' crops, reported a shipment of their tomatoes as a loss when in fact they brought top prices. But the farmers had no legal recourse in this case because the credit merchants controlled the courts.²⁰

In contrast, a second school of interpretation emphasizes principled decisions made by farmers and merchants. For instance, on May 22, 1915, 49 men—some likely farmers—signed a letter published in the *Rains County Leader* complaining about an anti-usury assault on banks. "Some of our citizens seem willing to sacrifice principle for the sake of a few paltry dollars," they wrote and labeled the agitators as "pessimistic, undesirable citizens, who exhibit a belief in destructive rather than constructive policies."²¹ Similarly, a Van Zandt county farmer echoed this sentiment in 1915 when he said, "[I] do not approve [of] usury suits. I think a man should stand by his contracts. [The] majority of farmers disapprove [the] suits and believe that the movement will die." The interviewer Walton Peteet noted, "This man was ploughing barefooted."²²

Merchants and early banks clearly had an ability to discern credit worthiness on the basis of merit, rather than basing it on the notion of rigid class categories as implied by the class-based interpretation. For example, in 1915 a merchant in Van Zandt County remarked, "In the past any farmer, no matter how worthless, could get credit on which to make a crop. [But] this year both banks and merchants are requiring security in all cases."²³ This implies that merchants were developing more nuanced criteria for distinguishing among different groups of farmers, rather than viewing farmers as a bloc. In Rockwall County around the same time, one banker said, "Both banks and merchants are exercising more care in extending credit and it is becoming more difficult for irresponsible farmers to get credit to make crops."²⁴ A merchant in Grand Saline described failed farmers as a "thriftless class who did not respect their obligations. Credit restrictions in the future may restrict the number of farmers but will improve the class."²⁵ One credit merchant in Abbot came up with three categories of potential tenant borrower:

Some tenants are better pay[ing] than [even] their landlords. There are three classes of renters: (1) Those who can and will pay without giving security; (2) Those who are good risks provided they are tied up by mortgage; and (3) Those who are too lazy and indifferent to work, and care nothing for their reputations. We try to do business only with the first class.²⁶

One lender said, "I will not rent land to a man over 40 years old, because if he has reached that age without getting ahead he has missed the ball too often for me to send him to bat."²⁷

Both upward and downward mobility were possible, suggesting more dynamic classes than the ascriptive categories of the class-based interpretation. For instance, Peteet concluded from his 300 rural interviews that "[a]ccording to the individual case, the status of a half-renter is a stepping-stone to a higher economic status for the energetic and ambitious young farmer without capital or a brief resting place in the descent from independence to dependence of the farmer who has failed and who ultimately becomes a wage laborer."²⁸

One 50 year-old tenant farmer in McClennan County placed emphasis not on slights from outside groups, but on decisions he himself had made in explaining his failure to prosper:

I was born in southern Arkansas and inherited small farm from father. Farm was poor pine land ...

I attribute failure to own a farm to my failure to economize and use good business judgment. In 1906 I banked \$900 after selling my crop and was offered a 66 acre farm for \$2500, which later sold for \$115 per acre. Did not buy because the land was not very good and thought I would wait until I had saved more money and could buy better place. Family began to want things, and as they had helped me to make the money, I could not refuse them. Bought piano for daughter (\$400), also bought ready made clothing, etc. Soon all my money was gone and bad crop years following kept me poor.²⁹

In fact, some merchants were as likely to display paternalistic attitudes toward farmers as they were adversarial attitudes. For instance, one Texas merchant in 1915 looked out for his borrowers in a way that banks did not. "Farmers in this county who borrow money from banks have not prospered as much as those who deal exclusively with the merchants. We [merchants] try to look after the interests of our customers and help them through the year. [But] the banks loan them so much money...." he said.³⁰ One banker in Grand Saline said, "While it is cheaper for farmers to borrow from banks and pay cash for supplies, it is better for some of them to deal with credit merchants for the merchant will only let them buy so much each month, while if they borrow money for a season's supply [from us bankers], they will spend it in a few months."³¹

Under the merchant model, farmers could benefit from the guiding hand and better judgment of the store owners. One Tyler merchant in the same year said,

Farmers who buy on [merchant] credit prosper more than those who borrow from the banks and buy for cash, because credit merchants supervise the operation of their customers more closely than banks do and check their tendency to buy recklessly and extravagantly... Many farmers are dependent and thriftless and will buy anything that they want regardless of value or price. A case in point: One of the best negro farmers in this county a few years ago owed this firm \$400.00 but made a good crop and paid his debt in full. Being anxious to keep him as a customer I urged the negro to buy a buggy and turned him over to the salesman who took the negro into the vehicle department where many buggies were on exhibition. When he came to the first buggy in view (a black one) he said: 'I will buy this one.' Passing further down the line he saw a red buggy and changed his mind and bought it without inquiring the price or examining the quality. This incident illustrates the lack of business sense of all negro and many white farmers in East Texas. Credit merchants of Tyler have for years tried to help their customers by inducing them to plant better seed and practice economy.³²

The merchant was often in a position to offer guidance to the farmers not only because of his sense of compassion and ability to steward resources, but also because in this traditional society the merchant had access to detailed information about individual farmer's spending habits. For instance, one store owner said in 1915 that he had observed that the farmer whose wife was a "butter and chicken woman"—i.e., not a spendthrift—was the man who ultimately bought, as opposed to rented, a farm because he carried no burden from a big store bill.³³

In contrast, farmers' relations with banks were more egalitarian than their relations with the patronizing and paternalistic merchants, as evidenced by comments from a credit merchant in Emory in 1915:

We [credit merchants] had to deal with our farmer customers just as we do with our children. When they come in for credit we have to decide for them how much they should have and then dole it out to them month by month...

[However,] when a farmer gets a loan at the bank early in the year, he does not leave the money in the bank but puts it in his pocket and walks around and acts as if he were independent. *He will come in here [to my store] and walk around with a lordly air of independence which I recognize at once [emphasis added].* When asked what he wants, he will say that he is just looking around but does not want to buy anything just then.³⁴

This lordly air of independence stands in stark contrast to the potentially demeaning experience of the farmer who lived on credit from the merchant. To the extent that the interaction in Emory was representative, modern bank credit may have allowed the farmers more dignity in their social interactions. If so, the unlikely harbinger of this greater sense of liberty was what one professional banking journal of the day called the "Cold, Emotionless Banker."³⁵ In fact, this emotionless banker was representative of a new breed of professional.

From the 1880s through the 1920s, banks increasingly displaced credit merchants as the lender of choice for Texas farmers. In 1915 a merchant in Rockwall County said, "The banks are gradually putting credit merchants out of business and I am going on a cash [only] basis this fall. The coming of so many cash [only] stores is making it unpleasant for credit merchants who must have [both] a cash and a credit price..."³⁶

At least five characteristics defined the new banking sector, including its recruitment from a new class of individual, its standardization of technical criteria for a modern profession, its creation of a modern professional identity, its exceptionally egalitarian ethos, and its abstractness. First, the emerging banking sector recruited from a new pool of individuals, one that had not existed before. One national observer in 1914 noted that "bankers themselves are now seldom the product of a mercantile career."³⁷ Some bankers were probably upwardly-mobile individuals from rural areas. For instance, J.W. Butler, who would eventually become the president of the Texas Bankers Association (TBA), was born in 1873 near Sherman to a Presbyterian minister. He began his banking career at the age of 17 with the title of "Assistant Cashier" in the Mason County Bank. After an apprenticeship with Frank W. Henderson, who was the son of a former governor and principal in the Mason bank, Butler found a partner and organized a bank in Clifton at the age of 22. Through a 55-year career, Butler would rise to become the president of the Texas City National Bank and would gain other accolades. He ended a brief autobiographical sketch in 1951 by writing, "But this busy-body, for work has now come to another day and rises the curtain [sic.] on the new chapter in a long life..., enters the cycle for retirement and rest and recreation."³⁸ Another banker, Ben Wooten, in 1959 received the American Bankers Association Horatio Alger rags to riches award. Wooten, like many Texas bankers, had grown up on a small farm outside of the small town of Timpson in East Texas.³⁹

Second, standardizing professional norms and creating a modern professional identity—while separate activities—were most likely mutually reinforcing. One development that advanced both was the creation of professional journals such as *The Texas Banker* (1907), *The Texas Bankers Record* (1911), and *The Southwestern Bankers Journal*

(1921). Titles of representative articles included “Bank Guarantee Ruling—It’s Important that Every Banker in Texas Should Read and Preserve It” (1910); “The Country Bank Check” (1909); “The Community’s Responsibility to Its Bank” (1921); and “A Woman’s Place in the Bank” (1921).⁴⁰

Third, to cultivate a separate identity, the new profession invoked banking institutions from past millennia. In 1894 Butler wrote an article entitled “Our National Banking System” in the *Daniel Baker Tatler* in which he informed the reader that “in the progress of civilizations, various trades and employments have become distinct in themselves. Just when and where the business of banking originated we do not know, although we find that banking was practiced essentially as it is now, in Rome about 800 years before Christ...”⁴¹ Similarly, an article from the *Southwestern Bankers Journal* from September of 1921 titled “The Evolution of Banking” argued that while many people believe that the Romans invented modern banking, the business of the Roman money lenders and dealers was similar to the older business of the Jews of the Middle Ages and the Lombards. The author guided the reader through the centuries of banking history, culminating in early 20th century Texas.⁴²

Further delineating the group, some people explicitly argued that the new banking profession was modern and on par with other specializations. For instance, a speaker in the TBA’s annual convention in 1889 underscored that “banking is a profession—a learned profession—one that requires years of patient toil and study to master... The fact that a man is a successful lawyer, doctor or merchant does not necessarily make him a successful Banker. The conditions of success in Banking are as different from those of other mercantile pursuits as the conditions of Bank stability are different from those of other commercial professions.”⁴³

Fourth, new banking put the borrower and lender on more equal footing. A more egalitarian relationship between borrower and lender characterized the new banking and replaced the paternalism of the old merchant/farmer relationship. In 1908 James B. Forgan, President of the First National Bank of Chicago, recognized this benefit to modern banking, arguing that “It is not a good thing for people that they should be treated as children or non-entities and relieved by

their government of the necessity of exercising ordinary judgment and discretion in their personal affairs."⁴⁴ Similarly, the Coggin Bros. pamphlet of 1904 respected the judgment of customers as to whether to give the company their business: "[W]e regard every one who has sufficient intellect and industry to need the services of a Bank [to be] capable of deciding for himself what institution he will select."⁴⁵ The pamphlet emphasized that a bank had both borrowers *and* depositors: "The bank's capital is perhaps furnished by a large number of people who are called stockholders. *These people are the bank.* [original emphasis]." This has implications for the bank/client relations, as potential borrowers should not feel any special sense of entitlement on funds, because these funds often belonged to similarly-situated people. "Never take offense at the questions that may be asked you by the Cashier, as all the depositors have had the same interrogations under like circumstances... Remember that the business of a bank is done mainly upon other people's money—the money of its depositors—and its first duty is to handle it safely."⁴⁶

Fifth, the new banking was abstract and required explanation. The authors of the Coggin Bros. pamphlet used the metaphor of a dammed stream to convey the essence of new banking:

The function of a bank in storing up capital, and thus increasing its power, may be likened to the damming of a stream. By storing up the vagrant force it may minister in a very potent way to advance the material prosperity of man. In like manner, banks, by collecting the numberless little rills of capital, which otherwise would minister much less effectively to human needs, perform a most valuable service to commerce, for by accumulating them, a great force is created, which is always needed in production and exchange.⁴⁷

A 1906 pamphlet entitled "Philosophy and Operation of Credit Unions" from the agricultural extension archive in the Cushing Library used similar metaphorical language to explain the abstract idea of the cumulative financial power of many small deposits in the rural credit union: "With great multitude of these tiny streamlets of

savings coming in steadily week after week and year after year, the total grows to a sizeable sum."⁴⁸ Ferdinand Tönnies, a distinguished early sociologist, also emphasized that modern banking was perceived as novel and abstract. He observed a similar transition in credit in 19th century Germany and described the more abstract function of the banker relative to that of the credit merchant. He wrote, "If the merchants are intermediaries of exchange, [then] the bankers are intermediaries of intermediation."⁴⁹

What segments of society did the new banking institutions serve? Today banks serve virtually every adult in the population, but it is more difficult to measure how widespread banks were at the end of the 19th century. The advent of correspondence relationships between urban and rural banks provides one measure. The urban and rural divide can be one of the most fundamental in a modernizing society, so an institution's ability to bridge this gap means that it has a relatively broad scope. In contrast, if only a small, urban-based, upper-class group participates in an institution and follows its rules, the scope is limited.⁵⁰ In stratified societies where the institution does not penetrate widely, bankers sometimes serve only an urban elite, whose assets they can more readily assess. For example, in South America in 1942, the weakly institutionalized National Bank of Bolivia (BNB) rejected the loan application of one Jorge M. Solares Camarona in the isolated province of Trinidad in the Amazon basin. Camarona offered to pledge as collateral a rural plot of land and 1,010 cattle. The BNB rejected the loan because the piece of land was too far outside the nearest urban center to verify the collateral.⁵¹

This was not the case in Texas. As early as the late 19th century, some urban Texas banks had begun to forge relations with rural banks. In 1892, one Texas banking professional argued for increased cooperation between urban and rural banks: "Between the city and country bank there should exist the most cordial and confidential relations."⁵² Another speaker in 1902 emphasized the need for cooperation among bankers in general and emphasized the interdependence that correspondence banking relationships represented: "Speaking personally, however, the city bank is dependent on the country bank for a great many things besides its account. [The city banker] depends on the country banker for information as to conditions that exist in his community, and how he regards the signs of the times there. [The country banker] has

usually gotten his ear close to the ground."⁵³ Urban banks advertised in banking journals to identify potential rural correspondence partners (See figure 3). In 1928 Southwestern Bell Telephone Company issued a study of the extensive correspondence networks among banks in the state.⁵⁴ By the late 1920s, modern banking had arrived to all of Texas.

Economic historians note that the Texas banking sector developed later than did similar institutions in eastern states.⁵⁵ For instance, the US census of 1850 listed zero "Bankers" and 2 "Bank and insurance officers" in Texas, while New York had 169 and 269 respectively.⁵⁶

Yet there is evidence to suggest that in broader comparative perspective Texas was advanced in its development of banking. For instance, Trespalacios's 1822 monetary scheme for Mexican soldiers (mentioned above) fell flat, while in 1846 R. & D.G. Mills successfully began to circulate its own private paper currency in Texas—Mills Money.⁵⁷ Mills Money succeeded in spite of the fact that an April 7, 1846 law made it illegal to issue notes to circulate. Its success was based on a preexisting practice among Texas farmers of trading written IOUs with one another and with merchants. Such IOUs could then be discounted at banks. For instance, the personal files of Samuel May Williams, father of Texas banking, include an IOU dated August 25, 1830 states that John D. Wright owed W[illiam] H. Taylor \$80.00 for 4 cows and 4 yearlings.⁵⁸ No such tradition of exchange existed among the Mexican soldiers Trespalacios wanted to help.

Within Texas, modern banking institutions in North and West Texas developed more quickly than those in East Texas. In North Texas' Wichita County in 1915 one banker said, "There is practically no store credit in this county now. Cash stores and banks have put an end to the old time credit system here."⁵⁹ In contrast, a 60 year-old dairy farmer in East Texas' Smith County in the same year observed that, "The power of the credit merchants is far-reaching and very few farmers are able to escape paying toll to them."⁶⁰ One tenant farmer who moved from East Texas to Wichita County was in a position to make a comparison based on his direct experience in the two regions. In 1915 he said, "Most farmers in this section [i.e., West Texas] are in debt to banks. [...] Been in this county for 7 years, came from east Texas. The old time credit system [i.e., merchant credit] does not exist

here.”⁶¹ Similarly, a technical manual from the late 1920s observed that store or merchant credit was more widely used in East Texas than in other sections of the state, and that it was seldom used in West Texas.⁶² In 1912 distinguished economist Walter Kemmerer noted that the merchant credit model, which he called the store-lien system, was more prominent in the cotton-producing old south.⁶³

The 1928 Southwestern Bell Telephone Company study of correspondence networks in Texas mentioned above provides additional evidence that banking developed faster in North and West Texas. Correspondence banking relationships, essentially partnerships between otherwise autonomous organization, are a reasonable measure of increasingly complex credit institutions: the larger the correspondence network, the more developed, abstract and modern the credit institutions it comprises. Figure 4 shows that the Dallas/Fort Worth network of correspondent banks, the blue area, runs in an East and West direction and dominates the upper portion of the state. Dallas in particular was mentioned among the correspondents of towns and cities from all over the state, except in the immediate vicinity of Houston and El Paso. On the other hand, the Houston correspondence bank area, in green, was relatively circumscribed.

Why do some societies develop modern credit institutions more quickly than others? Explanations for different rates of development can be grouped into three categories: legal⁶⁴ material⁶⁵ or cultural.⁶⁶ Legal impediments in Texas might explain some of the difference. For instance, Texas laws prohibited state-chartered banks from 1845 to 1905 (with the exception of 1869 to 1876). At times, various professional bodies mismanaged the sector, as when state law vested the politically-inclined Secretary of State with the power to grant state charters from 1906-13, leaving the more technical State Banking Board with little influence in chartering decisions. Other policies set capital reserve requirements too low (or too high).⁶⁷

An important legal explanation focuses on depositor guarantee laws. Depositor guarantee laws created perverse incentives for bankers and borrowers. For instance, the Texas Depositors Guarantee Law, in effect from 1909-27 and championed by Thomas B. Love and William Jennings Bryan, provided state-backed insurance for banks to assure that in the case of insolvency, depositors would get their

money back. But the law likely led to what economists call moral hazard, a principal's lax supervision of entrusted resources due to lack of accountability.⁶⁸ In 1908, Col. C.A. Brown, president of the First National Bank, Alpine, complained that the proposed guarantee law would create a bad incentive structure for bankers and borrowers, because "you would give credit where credit is not due, you would reward incapacity, you would count experience as naught, and make honest effort foolishness."⁶⁹

But by some accounts, Texas banks were often unaffected by specific banking laws. For instance, in 1889 one TBA speaker argued that "Every custom whose all pervading force and power is seen and felt in society and business is not necessarily to be found on the statute books. Some of the strongest are unwritten, deriving their power, not from feeble enactments, but from universal consent of mankind, and having their origin in the greatest of all volumes, the book of human experience."⁷⁰ One exasperated banking official in Texas in 1889 observed the futility of the legal prohibition of state-chartered banks: "[The state's] prohibition of Banks does not prohibit. Take for instance the National Banks and the private Banking firms in existence to-day in this State. Do not these go to prove the constitutional provision on this point an absurdity?"⁷¹ Private banks were already operating in the state before the passage of the 1863 National Banking Act and the 1905 State Law allowing state-chartered banks. T.W. Gregory, an Austin lawyer representing private bankers, argued in 1905 that "the cry of the widow has been heard in every part of the land notwithstanding the fine national banks...I am here to speak for the men [i.e., the private bankers] who with their fathers and grandfathers have borne the burdens of the financial system of the state for sixty years, long before there were any national banks..."⁷²

Such statements echoed sentiments from banking professionals outside the state who believed that formal laws, while important, grew out of antecedent social practices. For instance, C.R. Orchard, Special Assistant to the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, observed in about 1906, "I must confess that even now it is difficult to find very much difference between a credit union which is operating well under Federal Act and one which is doing a good job under some one of the 42 state acts. True, there are slight variations

between these laws, but it is possible to render satisfactory service to members under any of them.”⁷³ Richard Fetter was an economist and associate of Walter Kemmerer, the Princeton economist who studied credit institutions in the cotton producing states of the US and who helped establish central banks in a number of South American countries in the 1920s. In the 1920s Fetter advised South American countries rewriting banking laws, and this experience led him to observe that written agreements were often unable to force parties to do things they did not otherwise want to do. He wrote, “Pledging specific revenues [i.e., in a formal legal document] is not a guarantee of repayment. Some [countries] have done this and not paid back. Others have not done this, but taxed themselves to the hilt to make good on [an external] loan.”⁷⁴

Quantitative evidence supports this interpretive data. For instance, Texas had many more national banks than some other cotton producing states in 1890. One study estimated that 214 out of 417 national banks in 10 cotton producing states, about 51%, were in Texas.⁷⁵ However, this large concentration of national banks in Texas makes sense once you consider that Texas was the only state of the 10 that prohibited state-chartered banks at the time. Texas society simply channeled the underlying demand for state-chartered banking into nationally-chartered banks at a time when state laws prohibited the former.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from a consideration of the notorious 1905 banking law that allowed state chartered banking. Analysts point out that the number of state-chartered banks increased dramatically after the State Bank Law of 1905, suggesting that the law was determinative.⁷⁶ While it is true that the number of state chartered banks increased after 1905, this increase coincided with a marked decrease in the rate of growth of national banks, suggesting that the new state banks cannibalized some would-be national banks. And the increase in banks of all types—private, state, or national—began before 1905, suggesting that the 1905 law might have been in part a *consequence* of increased banking activity (See figure 5).

Secondly, material factors might have affected the development of credit institutions in Texas. In 1776 Adam Smith predicted that coastal areas would develop more quickly than inland areas as a function of lower transportation costs.⁷⁷ For instance, Texas in-landers complained that their region was materially handicapped compared with Houston

which possessed a 'coastal privilege'.⁷⁸ Similarly, analysts of the banking sector have noted that Texas had poor infrastructure⁷⁹, the cotton-based economy lacked diversification⁸⁰, Texas banks lacked capital⁸¹, and external events such as the Panic of 1907 or the Civil War negatively affected Texas institutions.⁸² A 'resource curse' associated with cotton—what E.E. Davis called a 'white scourge'—might have had some deleterious effects on the development of modern credit institutions in the state.⁸³ This list of material explanations for stunted development of credit institutions is not exhaustive and no one explanation is necessarily mutually exclusive with another. There is no doubt that such material factors affected the development of the Texas banking sector at times.

However, the difference in banking development between East Texas compared with West and North Texas is still counterintuitive, even taking the legal and material factors into account. Houston's proximity to Texas's coast should have been a boon to its banks' correspondence networks if material factors such as proximity to low-cost waterways were determinative. Furthermore, factors such as state laws, which were common to both regions, were unlikely to be the source of regional differences. Perhaps the material factor of the 'white scourge' of cotton was to blame?

E.E. Davis, rural researcher and later president of the University of Texas at Arlington, anticipated the 'resource curse' arguments of the late 20th century that development economists have applied to Third World countries. Davis argued that cotton was acidic and depleted the soil quickly. This led to transience in the populations that worked cotton lands. Additionally, cotton was easy to cultivate and therefore attracted a low-quality farmer, and it did not intellectually challenge those whom it did attract: "Poverty and ignorance have always clung to the cotton stalk like iron filings to a magnet."⁸⁴

However, the cotton resource curse argument does not appear to explain the differential rate of development of credit institutions in Texas. Figure 6 shows the Dallas/Ft. Worth banking correspondence networks of 1928 superimposed onto a map of cotton output by county in Texas from 1909-13. Cotton was produced in both correspondence areas. Some areas with high concentrations of cotton were in the more vibrant Dallas/Ft. Worth area, and some were in the Houston area. Areas with little cotton production fell in both correspondence

networks. If not material or legal factors, then might culture, the third factor mentioned, explain in part why some societies developed modern credit institutions faster than others? Karl Marx believed culture was the epiphenomenon of underlying material factors, while Max Weber believed that culture and material factors reciprocally influenced one another.⁸⁵ Culture here is defined as inherited ethical habit, that is, the norms and ideas that parents or role models convey to children at a very early age. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, "The man is so to speak a whole in the swaddling clothes of his cradle."⁸⁶

Consideration of culture as a potential determinative factor in the development of banking in Texas has a mixed history. There is evidence that some believed that a positive cultural endowment might promote banking. For instance, in 1912 *The Texas Bankers Record* republished an article from Woodrow Wilson, "The Basis of Banking Is Moral, Not Financial."⁸⁷ In contrast, others have tended to emphasize culture as a likely impediment to development, as when Texans displayed anti-bank sentiments or when bankers were "dishonest."⁸⁸

In fact, evidence suggests that culture in Texas was often a boon to credit institutions. Six cultural characteristics that supported credit institutions in Texas were the notions of individualism, an ethic of 'pay back', precocious literacy, certain characteristics of Texas religion, a widely shared cultural tradition that provided a common frame of reference, and the existence of special fraternities. First, Texas society had a repository of values of individualism and duty that was exceptional. Clarence Ousley described the difference between the attitudes of European credit cooperative members he observed in 1913 and the values of his own society. The European cooperative credit rested on an "intimate and stable village life to which we have no counterpart here [in the U.S.]." A system of government grants, loans or special favors supported credit systems in these communities⁸⁹, but such governmental arrangements would not work in Texas because they "are impossible under our constitution, if not, indeed, contrary to our fundamental principles of government." The collective and stable nature of the European village and its form of mutual credit, in his judgment, was at odds with his own society's emphasis on "self reliance and the sense of individual responsibility."⁹⁰

Second, Texas had values of 'pay back.' One example of the pay-

back ethic comes from Jesse Hill, who moved from Tennessee to a rural community named Johnson County on the outskirts of Fort Worth in 1865. He had left a debt in Tennessee to start a new life, but he used the first \$500 that he made to pay back his Tennessee debt.⁹¹ In 1915, one land owner in Hill County said, “[I] made all payments promptly but starved myself and family to do it. For ten years I never handled any money; bought from credit merchants and rarely paid all I owed at the end of the year. Got out of debt by ‘stingy living’.”⁹² Clarence Ousley, promoter and researcher of rural credit unions in the 1910s, in an article titled “Rights and Duties” argued for a generalized sense of duty among the rural populations with whom he worked.⁹³ A young man who would go on to become a prominent El Paso banker in the 1950s borrowed money from his boss, Doty, and later remembered Doty’s fatherly advice: “Never miss a payment, i.e., show them that you are good...”⁹⁴

The values of making good on one’s debts were reinforced through public rituals. For instance, the organizers of the silver anniversary celebration for the Texas Extension Service, held in Houston in 1929, wrote a play dealing with themes of debt, duty and individualism. This maudlin three act play, entitled “Dawn”, tells the story of the Pruitts, a poor farmer family in East Texas, who make good on their debts even when beset by bad fortune. In the first act, set in about 1905, the blasphemous father of the family, Pa Pruitt, complains that God has forsaken them by visiting a drought upon the region. In Act Two, set fifteen years later, we see the family aged and in even more dire straits than in Act One. The family’s spirit is bent, but not broken. Ma Pruitt’s “face is a little more wrinkled and her hair grayer, but her head is still up and the same keen expression looks out her eyes.” The audience learns that on a stormy night shortly after the conversation narrated in the first act, Pa Pruitt left a lodge meeting never to return. He was carrying \$2,500 in members’ dues that night for the construction of a new lodge, and many logically assumed that he skipped town. While the family was convinced of his innocence, they did not repudiate the debt. “Nobody in this world could make me believe Pa’d steal one cent. I know him too well and he was honest if ever a man was. [While] \$2,500 is a terrible lot to poor folk [like us,] John [the son] will never rest till he’s paid it all back,” says Ma. John does just this. “It won’t be long now. After [John] sells the crops this year and pays all we owe, we ought to have \$1,000 to pay on it [i.e., the \$2,500 debt]. That’ll make

\$1,500 [left].” In Act Three, twenty-three years after the incident, locals discover the bones of Pa Pruitt in an embankment near the river with the \$2,500 from the lodge. It is revealed that returning from the lodge the night of the terrible storm, the ground that Pa was walking on near the river collapsed beneath his feet and he was buried alive. The family feels vindicated in having publically confirmed what they already knew: Pa wasn’t a thief.⁹⁵ This is just one example of an ethic of pay back.

Third, precocious literacy likely favored the development of modern banking in the state. Basic literacy is a must for modern banking. For instance, the Coggin Bros. pamphlet of 1904 had detailed instructions on how to write a check: “Never write a check with a lead pencil, always a pen and ink [sic].”⁹⁶ Texas had a literacy rate of 68% in 1850 and 85% in 1900. The US literacy rate was 89% in 1900. In contrast, Mexico had a literacy rate of 32% in 1910; India had a literacy rate of 10% in 1916; Brazil had a literacy rate of 31% in 1920; and Bolivia had a literacy rate of 18% in 1900. About 70% of African Americans could read in Texas in 1910.⁹⁷

Fourth, religious doctrine likely had a direct effect on credit institutions in Texas. Religion deals with the fundamental relationships between the weak to the strong, and credit, whether traditional and from a merchant or modern and from a bank, represents a relationship between the strong (the lender) and the weak (the borrower). In 1916 Texas rural researcher Ousley expressed his support for Italian economist Leone Wollemborg’s observation of credit relations: “It is a well-known fact that public opinion is nearly always inclined to side with the weak as against the strong, and as, rightly or wrongly, the debtor is generally considered the weaker party, he usually has public opinion on his side...”⁹⁸ It is likely for this reason that religious traditions in Texas often had explicit pronouncements on creditor/debtor relations.

Religion understood in these terms, however, likely had a mixed impact on credit institutions in the state. Potentially supportive of credit institutions, some have found the roots of Texas individualism in its interpretation of Protestant doctrine. The notable Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb wrote

Martin Luther declared that every man was his own priest, that salvation was a matter between the individual and God, and that no intermediary was essential to sign visas and open sacramental gates... According to Luther, each man had a direct wire to God, and need not go through an exchange or submit to much censorship. The Bible was made a free book which every literate man could read for himself, not an oracle whose words could be understood only by the anointed... He translated it into the language of the common people."⁹⁹

On the other hand, religious prohibitions of usury could retard the development of credit institutions. For instance, an early Texas school prayer exhorted students to "beware of debt."¹⁰⁰ Some bankers found religious prohibitions on usury to be tedious. One speaker at the 1889 TBA convention gave a lengthy survey of the history of prohibition of usury in his speech to make a case against considering anti-usury laws. He criticized the anti-usury elements of the "Mosaic law" of the Jews, the early Christian church, the Romans and Lombards, among others.¹⁰¹

Fifth, there was a widely shared ethical framework in Texas. Analysts sometimes emphasize religious prohibitions on usury and interpret this to mean that religion was a net negative for the development of credit institutions. However, this fails to distinguish between the specific content of an ethical tradition and the extent to which a given ethical tradition is shared in a society. All things being equal, the more widely shared an ethical tradition is, the more likely individuals are to trust and cooperate with one another. For instance, Islam is said to be a *lingua franca* among otherwise fragmented ethnic groups in Mali.¹⁰² In the early 19th century, Max Weber noted that a travelling salesman for Undertakers Hardware, a company producing iron tombstone lettering in Oklahoma, would observe a would-be client's general piousness in determining whether to extend him credit: "[A]s far as I am concerned, everyone can believe what he likes, but if I discover that a client doesn't go to church, then I wouldn't trust him to pay me fifty cents: Why pay me if he doesn't believe in anything?" To Weber, Americans' identifying creditworthiness with shared religious values made sense in a sparsely-settled land with an excessively formal Anglo-Norman legal system.¹⁰³

As a unifying moral framework, the shared Christianity of Texans is likely thus fifth factor that promoted cooperation in credit institutions. Reading the memoirs of Texas bankers, one comes across numerous references to Christianity, freemasonry and other religiously-based fraternities, and these values were shared by Texans from a number of different social backgrounds. For instance, an early cattleman in Texas, Christopher Columbus Slaughter (1837-1919), provided early banking services by safeguarding his own and others' valuables in the untamed Texas frontier in the mid-nineteenth century. He would go on to organize the City Bank of Dallas in 1879, the City National Bank in 1881, and the American National Bank in 1884. Slaughter, also an itinerate preacher, founded 50 churches and baptized 3,000 people during his 50 year ministry, and carried a Bible in his saddle bags during his cattle driving expeditions.¹⁰⁴

The TBA began their annual meetings with prayers, and its leaders frequently made reference to their shared religion. For instance, at the 1892 TBA convention, E.M. Longcope argued forcefully, "Observe: there are two civilizations, the moral or religious and the practical. Upon the former nothing need be said save this: you can not have a full measure of success in working out your business civilization without the constant assistance of moral force..."¹⁰⁵ In 1901 the TBA began its annual meeting with a prayer from Rev. Leavell: "Almighty God, the Father of our spirits, the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ [...]"¹⁰⁶ After declaring the 1902 TBA meeting open for business, president J.W. Butler said, "Before proceeding, however, with our business, we wish to have the Divine blessing invoked upon our work." Rev. William M. Harris then prayed, "Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for a civilization which, with all of its defects, yet recognizes God in all things and on all occasions."¹⁰⁷

A religious worldview was not a unique attribute of professional bankers, but also of some common men in rural areas. Reviewing files in the agricultural extension archives at the Texas A&M University, one finds technical documents on topics such as rural credit, hog raising, preservative canning methods, and the mechanical harvesting of cotton interspersed with religious documents. For instance, in 1946 a director of the extension service gave a speech that was influential based on the amount of correspondence it generated. Titled "Soils

and Souls”, the article begins, “As an agricultural worker, it is indeed a privilege for me to be able to work with, lead and guide them in their daily activities and spiritual lives. As a layman, I would like to take the Bible text for my topic, which is ‘Soils and Souls’, and try to give you my ideas as to a relationship between the soil and the souls of our people—particularly our rural people.”¹⁰⁸

In the case that religious interpretations did differ, the widely shared religious vocabulary at least gave some Texas bankers and their society a common ethical framework within which they could carry out their debates on usury. Some Texas bankers knew scripture well enough to argue for a religious interpretation that would not preclude modern finance. For instance, in 1892 a banker argued that doctrinaire proscriptions of usury came from

the strained interpretation of a few passages in the Bible: In three instances in which Moses forbade the taking of usury synonymous with interest by the Jews from one another and from strangers under certain circumstances, he twice refers to the great poverty of the borrowers. [However,] the conclusion that interest was lawful, but that the rate should be governed by feelings of charity, would do no violence to a reasonable construction of the language. In the books of none of the subsequent writers, except for possibly Ezekiel, is the unlawfulness of charging for money even suggested...¹⁰⁹

Sixth, freemasonry and membership in other religiously based societies was important for Texas bankers. For instance, Samuel Williams, the ‘father of banking’ in Texas, commissioned a portrait of himself in full freemason garb¹¹⁰, and Roy W. Aldrich, a banker of Texas origin operating in Golden, Missouri in the 1890s, displayed his freemason affiliation in the same newspapers in which he advertised his banking services (See figure 7). Samuel Doak Young (1896-1987), born in East Texas to a Methodist minister, would become a successful banker in El Paso. On one occasion, Young noticed that “That guy was wearing a Shriner pin on his lapel” when discussing a bad check. The conclusions he drew from the

pin are lost to history, but he considered it notable, demonstrating his keen eye for cultural indicators.¹¹¹

There is quantitative evidence to suggest that Protestants and Masons were slightly over-represented in the banking sector. According to census reports, approximately 80% of members of religious organizations in Texas were Protestant in 1890; about 75% in 1906; and about 73% in 1936.¹¹² Reviewing the biographical information on 200 Texas bankers or merchants born from 1772 to 1918, it was possible to classify 86 in terms of their religious affiliation. Of the 86, 75 (or 87%) were Protestant, 6 were Jewish and 4 were Catholic. Twenty-six of the 86, or about 30%, were members of a Masonic fraternity.¹¹³ Modern economic scholars have shown that Judaism was important for long range trading networks in the Mediterranean.¹¹⁴

Returning to the observation of the difference in the rate of development of banking institutions in East Texas and North and West Texas, cultural differences of a secular sort might complement material and legal explanations. Terry Jordan in a seminal 1967 article argued that there were distinctive Upper Southern and Lower Southern areas of cultural influence in Texas. Upper Southern culture corresponded more or less to the Scotch-Irish migration waves that first settled Texas in the early 19th century, and the Lower Southern culture describes the people from the old south plantation and slave-owning tradition who later pushed the first settlers westward. By 1880, these migration waves had stabilized, and it was possible for Jordan to classify counties as either Upper Southern or Lower Southern based on analysis of county-level nativity data for settlers as reported by the 1880 US Census. The dividing line between the Upper Southern and Lower Southern areas of Texas, for instance, runs between Hunt/Van Zandt counties, Dallas/Kaufman counties, and Travis/Bastrop counties.¹¹⁵

Figures 4 and 6 show Jordan's dividing line (in red) superimposed on maps of correspondence networks and cotton producing regions, respectively. The Upper Southern cultural area is nearly identical with the Dallas/Fort Worth correspondence banking areas, and Dallas itself is the quintessential Upper Southern city. The bank-friendly county of Wichita described in the Peteet interview above is in the Upper Southern area. By contrast, the merchant-credit dominated "east Texas" area

described by the tenant farmer fell within the Lower Southern cultural area. According to this analysis, the area of cultural migration would seem to offer as plausible a predictor of whether a county would make an early transition from merchant to banking credit as material or legal explanations.¹¹⁶

Such an observation begs the question of which cultural values of the Upper Southern migration wave could have been conducive to the formation of complex credit institutions. Historians and social scientists often find it difficult if not impossible to quantify the prevalence of attitudes among populations over long periods of time, and often turn to proxy measures. Though imperfect, the presence of slavery may serve as a proxy indicator for important cultural values. Slavery flourished in Lower Southern counties in a way that it did not in Upper Southern counties. Figure 8 shows Jordan's cultural dividing line superimposed on 1860 US Census Bureau map, which was created to support Civil War bond issues by showing the slave population of the US on a county by county basis. Clearly there was a higher concentration of slaves in the Lower Southern counties in Texas.

Tocqueville argued that slavery was an evil in America, one that ruined both master and slave. This was not primarily because slavery pitted groups with differing economic interests against one another, but rather because slavery debased laudable values: "Slavery [...] does not attack the American confederation directly by its interests, but indirectly by its mores." For instance, some slave owners Tocqueville observed eschewed menial work because "they would fear resembling slaves." In contrast, the non-slave owner

does not see slaves running around his cradle. He does not even encounter free servants, for most often he is reduced to providing for his needs himself. Scarcely is he in the world before the idea of necessity comes from all sides to present itself to his mind; he therefore learns early to know by himself exactly the natural limit of his power; he does not expect to bend by force wills that are opposed to him, he must before all gain their favor. He is therefore patient, reflective, tolerant, slow to act, and persevering in his designs.¹¹⁷

Tocqueville's characterization of the values of the non-slave owning society echo some of the values extolled by the author of the Coggin Bros. pamphlet: "Do not kick everyone in your path"; "Learn to think and act for yourself"; "No man can get rich by sitting around"; and "Caution is the feather of security." The values Tocqueville mentions call to mind the values of circumspection of a modern banker in Texas as conceived by the *Texas Bankers Journal* in 1910:

[A Model Banker is] a man of fine presence; not so young as to be fresh, and not so old as to be stale. His face has lines of decision, but is relieved by a pleasant smile and kindly eye. His manner is courteous, and seems to indicate that he would rather do a thing than not do it. His word is sometimes very hard to get, but always harder to break. He promises rather less than more than he performs.¹¹⁸

Thus, an ethic of independent achievement and willingness to depend on their own labor may have marked the farmers and future bankers in North and West Texas and created a social dynamic hospitable to modern banking.

In this paper, I have attempted to describe in qualitative terms the transition from merchant credit to banking credit that took place from about 1880 to about 1920. Texas was not alone in history in the most basic elements of this transition, though certain elements of the Texas story were undoubtedly distinctive. A sociological understanding of credit institutions can complement important existing economic histories of this transition and give us a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. Comparative examination of differential rates of development of modern credit institutions between North and West Texas versus East Texas suggests that along with legal and material factors, we should consider the possible impact of culture.

Notes

- 1 "Banking Made Plain: What a Bank Is, What a Bank Does, How to Deal with It, and How It Will Help with You" (Brownwood: Coggin Bros. & Ford, 1904 [?]), 1, 10, 16.
- 2 T. Harry Gattton, *The Texas Bankers Association: The First Century, 1885-1985* (Austin: The Texas Bankers' Association, 1984); Lewis Haney, "Farm Credit Conditions in a Cotton State," *The American Economic Review* 4, No. 1 (Mar. 1914): 47.
- 3 Walter Buenger argues that northeast Texas underwent dramatic social and economic change between 1887 and 1930. With regard to credit institutions, he came to the conclusion that by 1917, "if not earlier, the intricate connections between cotton growers, merchants, bankers, and cotton buyers had evolved beyond the well-known parameters of the nineteenth century." Walter Buenger, *The Path to a Modern South* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), xv, 61 (quotation); For general works see Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage, 1955); Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1978), 66, 67, 174, 177, 179; Charles S. Aiken, *The Cotton Plantation South since the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Jonathan Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama 1860-1885* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1978); On the 1877 populist ferment in Lampasas, the future home of the Texas Bankers Association, see Lawrence Goodwin, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 33-5.
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- 45 "Banking Made Plain", 24.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 5, 9.
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- 48 C.R. Orchard, "Philosophy and Operation of Credit Unions", 4, box 5/7, Trotter Collection, Extension Collection (Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University), cited hereafter as CUSH.
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115 Terry G. Jordan, "The Imprint of the Upper and Lower South on Mid-Nineteenth-Century Texas," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 57, No. 4 (Dec. 1967): 690; On this cultural divide, see also Randolph B. Campbell, "Antebellum Texas: From Union to Disunion, 1846-1861," in Light Townsend Cummins and Alvin R. Bailey, Jr., (eds.), *A Guide to the History of Texas* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 21; T.R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: a History of Texas and the Texans* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 288; Gatton, *First Century*, 5, 10; In 1854, Frederick Law Olmsted noted, "The vaguest tavern conversation assumes a natural antagonism and future division between Eastern and Western Texas." Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas; or, a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier*, ed. Randolph B. Campbell (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 2004), 235; Ayers, "Subregions of the South, Western Prairies vs. Cotton Uplands", 5; The Upper Southern and Lower southern cultural migrations correspond to the 'Backcountry' and the 'Distressed Cavaliers and Indentured Servants' migrations, respectively, in Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 207-418, 605-782. These analyses emphasize seed or mainstream cultures. For an argument emphasizing the importance of studying seed or mainstream cultures in Texas, see Terry Jordan, "A Century and a Half of Ethnic Change in Texas, 1836-1986," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 89, No. 4 (April 1986): 385-422; In contrast, many contributions to the study of subcultures in Texas have been added to the literature in the last 30 years. Two representative examples include Foley, *White Scourge* and Buenger, ed., *Texas through Time*; Horace Kallen's work is an important intellectual forerunner of these works emphasizing subcultures. Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924). These schools of thought might further be traced back to that of the powerful thinker, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York, 1996).

116 I can find no published argument for why North and West Texas developed modern credit institutions more quickly than East Texas, though a knowledgeable regional historian conceded in an interview with me that Upper Southerners were "very entrepreneurial."

117 Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 329-31, 332 (resembling quotation), 333-4, 359, 360 (reflective, tolerant quotation), 361 (interests quotation). Contrast with Wright, *Old South, New South*, 17ff., who answers the question of whether slavery retarded or aided the South's development with only the vocabulary of economics.

118 "A Model Banker," *Texas Bankers Journal* (Oct. 1910): 9.

Book Reviews

Houston Cougars in the 1960s, Death Threats, the Veer Offense, and the Game of the Century by Robert D. Jacobus. Texas A&M University Press. Contents. Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgements. Chapters 1-18. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 366. \$30.00.

The Houston of the early 1960s was a vibrant, dynamic place full of entrepreneurs and visionaries. It had become the center of attention for the world when NASA and Mission Control came to town, and thousands of people from around the country came to Houston to live and work. Judge Roy Hofeinz had, largely through his own showmanship and determination, managed to convince community leaders to gamble on the creation of the Houston Astrodome, and thereby had secured a major league sports franchise for the city, the Houston Astros. It was into this environment that the University of Houston brought two more innovators, basketball coach Guy V. Lewis and football coach Bill Yeoman.

In *Houston Cougars in the 1960s*, Robert Jacobus examines the rise of UH sports through the prism of these two innovators. Both coaches realized that the key to successful programs begins with the recruitment of athletes, and both further realized that UH was a tough sell to elite prospects given the fact that sports were a relatively recent addition to UH, and the facilities at the time were woefully inadequate to attract top-flight talent to the Cullen Avenue campus. Lewis, who was considered to be UH's best student athlete up to that point, had a long association with the University, and Yeoman was brought in from Michigan State, where he had been an assistant coach to the legendary Duffy Daugherty. Both men believed that the key to improving their respective programs lie in expanding their pool of recruits, so both men turned to the African-American community. Lewis traveled to Louisiana and secured the services of Don Chaney and Elvin Hayes, while Yeoman signed running back Warren McVea from San Antonio.

It would be these three young men who would integrate UH athletics. Jacobus deftly details the challenges faced by these athletes,

and the support they received from not only the UH coaching staff, but also from their teammates and members of the community. Most of the racial incidents experienced by these athletes came not from UH supporters, but from opponents and their fans, primarily during road games. Despite the numerous racist episodes they had to endure, the players became a close-knit group, and the fortunes of UH sports began to rise. The basketball and football programs achieved national recognition, and UH athletics became viable on a national level. The basketball program in particular joined the ranks of the country's elite programs, a fact which would culminate in what would become known as the "Game of the Century" which pitted number one ranked UCLA under John Wooden against Guy V. Lewis's number two ranked Houston Cougars in 1968 in the Houston Astrodome. UH won the game, and would reach the Final Four for the first time that season.

All three of these African American athletes would go on to enjoy stellar pro careers, Hayes and Chaney in the NBA, and McVea in the NFL. Both Yeoman and Lewis would go on to have lengthy and successful careers coaching at UH. Yeoman became known as the father of the Veer Offense, and Lewis again achieved national recognition with his Phi Slama Jama teams of the 1980s. All in all, Jacobus does a credible job with highlighting the role that UH and these three young men played in the integration of college sports, and in fostering a more inclusive environment in the city of Houston.

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Riding Lucifer's Line: Ranger Deaths along the Texas-Mexico Border, by Bob Alexander. Foreword by Byron A. Johnson, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. University of North Texas Press. Contents. Introduction. Photo Gallery. Chapters 1-24. Afterword. Endnotes. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 404. \$29.95.

No one will argue that any type of law enforcement officer lives a dangerous life, regardless of the geographical place and time, be it during the earliest days of our country or the period of our history

known as the Wild West. The men and women whose duty is to enforce the law may well live in a peaceful community, but when challenged by a law-breaker the individual enforcing the laws is alone, "living and standing and fighting on a bona fide frontier" as historian Alexander states (14). One constant in law enforcement is that the bullet was not made intentionally to kill you, but when fired it may take you down. Any place may become deadly; but all will agree that the Rio Grande historically is a deadly place, where conflict has reigned for centuries and will continue to do so. For nearly two centuries the lawmen most associated with enforcing the law in the southwest are the Texas Rangers; those men wearing the star have killed, but as Alexander narrates, 25 have paid the ultimate price since the beginning of the Frontier Battalion days of 1874.

Alexander's thorough research into the records of the Texas Rangers reveals a deadly fact: in every county which separates Texas and Mexico there has been one or more Rangers killed in action. L.H. McNelly served less than four years as a captain, but after fighting feudists in DeWitt County then was sent to the river to combat cattle thieves riding for Cortina. Near Brownsville on the old Palo Alto Prairie battleground Ranger L.B. "Sonny" Smith lost his life in a deadly confrontation. Cortina lost many of his men, as well as the herd of stolen cattle, driven off from Texas range lands.

In *Lucifer's Line* Alexander produces much more than a listing of those Rangers who lost their lives and the details of their last fight, much more. His introduction (14 pages) is a brief overview of why the Rangers were formed in the early 1820s, how they continued through the Civil War, being replaced by the Texas State Police (1870-1873) and then reinstated with the formation of the Frontier Battalion in 1874. The Frontier Battalion continued until the early twentieth century as the Ranger Force. Alexander then details the lives of the those men who paid the ultimate price, beginning with the men of the Washington County Volunteer Militia under Captain McNelly who considered themselves Rangers as much as those in the official Frontier Battalion. McNelly's only loss was Private L.B. "Sonny" Smith, the youngest Ranger ever who lost his life, through that of Joseph B. Buchanan; their lives are detailed.

Between 1874 and 1921 Alexander narrates the life and death

of those who fell. The Rio Grande separated the borders of the two countries; it was dangerous then and remains so today. Part one details the story of the dozen who were killed in the so-called frontier era; then starting in 1901 with the creation of the Frontier Force (1901-1935) thirteen Rangers lost their lives patrolling the border. The men who died along the river are not well known today. Certainly the name most familiar to lovers of the Texas Ranger history is that of Captain Frank Jones who was killed in a fight with Mexican bandits near El Paso in 1893.

In addition to the down-to-earth writing style Alexander is best-known for illustrating his works with a generous amount of illustrations. The two galleries of photographs add much to our knowledge of not only Texas Ranger history but the problems which plagued the border then and continue to do so today. The problems of 1874 and before continue now in 2016 and will continue to do so - probably as long as there is a river. Only the technology of fighting lawlessness continues; unfortunately there will be more lives lost in combating crime while *Riding Lucifer's Line*.

Chuck Parsons,
Luling, Texas

The Martial Imagination, Cultural Aspects of American Warfare by Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. Texas A&M University Press. 2013. Contents: Acknowledgements.. Introduction. Parts 1-4. Contributors. Index. Pg. 248. Paperback. \$29.95

Cultural historians expand our understanding of the grand narrative that dominates military history through various lenses of social influence. Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. attempts this connection in a collection of essays that explore military history through violence, gender, memory, and religion. Twelve scholars from varied backgrounds analyze societal imaginations of military service and present a collection that examines varied moments in time from the Revolutionary War through the War on Terror that profoundly shaped personal, state, and national identities.

Important themes of this collection are explanations of violence and conquest as well as the roles gendered structures of the American military played in shaping both foreign affairs and national identity. John M. Kinder examines American zoos during the Cold War era as military –zoological complexes that shaped not only cultural imagination about foreign policy but also modern day zoo keeping practices. Kathleen Kennedy examines historian Francis Parkman's personal pain and suffering as qualifications for writing an accurate narrative about war and trauma. Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr. provides perhaps the most gripping evaluation of the collection. He examines the Texas Ranger in American lore as a complicated reflection of both explanations for and fears of violence in western expansionism and frontier exceptionalism. James J. Schaefer examines Revolutionary War soldier Charles Lee, seen by British authorities as distasteful and traitorous, despite allowing him certain privileges due to his status of importance and gentility.

Bonnie Miller argues American interpretations of the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the Spanish American War of 1898 relied on narratives that constructed ideologies and images of Latinos that supported military escalation. Texans often justified US intervention in Mexico by portraying Mexican men as inferior beings and a threat to women, much in the same way that Americans portrayed Spaniards in Cuba nearly fifty years later. Belinda Linn Rincón's analysis of Evangelina Cisneros provides a multi-faceted observation of both Cisneros' daring and struggle in the patriotic quest for *Cuba Libre* as well as American publisher Hearst's thirst to portray her, and Cuba, in feminized roles that suggested their need to be rescued and cared for by the masculinity of the American military.

While twentieth-century media portrayed the US Army as multicultural and gender inclusive, the fear of a weakened and emasculated military prompted the rhetoric of strength and unity. Jeremy K. Saucier evaluates US Army advertising after the conflict in Vietnam, and illustrates these complexities of the emergence of multiculturalism in the armed forces in the wake of devastating blows to the imagined strength of the white male soldier after the war. Susan Eastman explores how films such as *We Were Soldiers* recast America's war in Vietnam as a "good war" and ultimately helped Americans forget the causes and ultimate consequences of the war in Vietnam. Jonna Eagle

examines the melodrama as a lens through which to view the political imagination of America. From Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to *Rambo: First Blood*, stories of heroic rescue, struggle, and suffering shaped the narrative of American militarization. Historical entertainment urges audiences to remember military conflicts as examples through which they can process feelings of victimization and threats of violence. However effective examinations of remembrances are, Jason Phillips encourages historians to examine imagined futures through letters and diaries of Civil War soldiers. Timothy J. Cathcart examines the imagination of air militarization as a Christian endeavor. Reaching the sky and delivering unprecedented destruction from the heavens, the Army Air Forces imagined their roles in the military tied to the strength of their religious mission, and pilots viewed the creation of a separate air force as an act of God's will.

In all, these twelve historians weave together a narrative of the American imagination of war that is new, fresh, and relevant to the grand narrative of military history. Though the key essay by Amy S. Greenberg skillfully weaves the importance of cultural analysis of the martial with an excellent evaluation of choices politicians made on the brink of war in 1898 to seemingly forget the Mexican American War of 1848, some essays in the collection meet the focus of this essay and some do not. While this may appear to some as a deterrent from the book's strength, this collection initiates a cultural introduction to military history and as such the subjects of and benefits of such analysis should not bound by chronological or geographical borders. Overall it is an excellent book for cultural and military historians alike, as well as anyone interested in the lore of Texas history and identity.

Cecilia Gowdy-Wygant
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Front Range Community College

In the Governor's Shadow, The True Story of Ma and Pa Ferguson, by Carol O'Keefe Wilson. University of North Texas Press. 2014. Contents: Preface. Illustrations. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Prologue. Chapters 1-25. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 302. Hardcover. \$29.95

Carol O'Keefe Wilson has produced an excellent book on the lives and political careers of James and Miriam Ferguson. The Fergusons dominated Texas politics from 1915 to 1935, and remained politically active until the early 1940s. During those years James Ferguson, who was known as "Farmer Jim" or "Pa" Ferguson, was twice elected governor of Texas. He was impeached during his second term and his wife Miriam, who was known as "Ma" Ferguson, then took up the Ferguson political banner and she was also twice elected to serve as governor of Texas.

Although "Farmer Jim" did own some agricultural land – some of it debt free through Miriam's inheritance – he was principally a businessman, banker and reluctant attorney and in the long run not particularly successful at any of those endeavors. His business ventures were financed by considerable debt and the Fergusons were continually in a cash flow quandary. Through his business dealings he was able to lose even some of the land Miriam inherited. In spite of those and other shortcomings, both the Fergusons were successful at one thing, and that was getting elected as governors of Texas.

Carol O'Keefe Wilson is no fan of the Fergusons. She describes James Ferguson as being "ethically challenged" and for good reasons. These reasons, from questionable banking practices to questionable loans, pardons, political favors, are set forth in detail in Wilson's extensively researched book. This research relies heavily on newspaper accounts, the transcripts of the House of Representatives investigation into James Ferguson's activities while governor and the transcripts of the impeachment trial.

On some occasions it is difficult to tell if Wilson is expressing her opinion or the opinion of her cited source. Another problem is her treatment of Bell County history during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. In reference to a book written by the Ferguson's daughter, Ouida Ferguson Nalle, Wilson correctly states, "We naturally expect a book written by a family member to hold a bias, and Nalle

delivers liberally on that expectation". Wilson further states that Nalle's book "is dishonest as a comprehensive account by virtue of its critical omissions, errors and distortions". It is a shame Wilson did not recognize some of the same problems in the book by George W. Tyler edited by Charles W. Ramsdell on which she relies for her history of Bell County during the Civil War and especially Reconstruction.

However, the book is not about Bell County history but rather about the Fergusons and in telling that story Wilson does an excellent job. Everyone who is interested in Texas politics in the first half of the twentieth century, or for that matter any period of Texas history, will find this book both entertaining and informative.

*Tom Crum
Granbury, Texas*

Recollections of a Tejano Life by Timothy Matovina & Jesus F. De La Teja. University of Texas Press. 2013. Contents: Preface. Introduction. Edited Reminiscences. The Memoirs. Unpublished Second Part. Manuscript. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 190. Hardcover. \$55.00

Timothy Matovina and Jesus de la Teja have done an extraordinary job of capturing a snapshot of Tejano life in the 19th century through the lenses of Antonio Menchaca. Menchaca was one of the "veterans of '36," Texas born and a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. A hero of the Battle of San Jacinto.

The Introduction provides a look into Menchaca's family and life. A family tree compiled by de la Teja dates the family back to the early 18th century. Menchaca's role in the Texas Revolution, especially at San Jacinto is also discussed by the editors as are other details of the years leading up to the Civil War and later Reconstruction. In 1875 Menchaca was one of many who argued for better treatment of Tejano veterans. Menchaca died in 1879.

Menchaca's reminiscences supported by the editors annotations offer the reader a view into the lives of Tejanos in the 19th century.

Native American problems as well as diseases like the cholera were daily threats. Menchaca remembers the death of Jim Bowie's wife due to cholera as well as the death of Governor Veramendi and his wife. The arrival of Davy Crockett was celebrated with a ball. Details such as the arrival of Juan Seguin with a message from William B. Travis and Menchaca's conversation with Sam Houston and later Santa Ana make the Texas Revolution come alive. Born in 1800 Menchaca lived through the Mexican Independence Movement, the Texas Revolution, the War with Mexico and the Civil War. It is no surprise that Menchaca was proud of his heritage and the history he had lived. Surprisingly although known as a hero of the Texas Revolution he did not speak of his escapades.

Matovina and de la Teja overcame four challenges in editing this work. Firsthand, although difficult to find, the editors discovered a full collection of Menchaca's reminiscences, published in the 1907 work *Passing Show*. The second challenge pitted the James P. Newcomb 1907 version against the 1937 Memoirs published by the Yanaguana Society. With the possibility that there could be material missing from the copies it was difficult to decipher which one resembles the original

Assassination & Commemoration, JFK, Dallas, & The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza by Stephen Fagin. University of Oklahoma Press. 2013. Contents: Illustrations. Foreword. Acknowledgements. Preface. Introduction. Conclusion. Epilogue. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 238. Hardcover. \$29.95

Stephen Fagin has crafted a narrative that is at once an institutional history, an examination of the critical issues in heritage preservation and a primer on the importance of leadership and community engagement in building consensus. As the oral historian for The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, Fagin brings a rich array of voices together to tell the story of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963, the roller-coaster of proposals and counter-proposals surrounding a commemorative

project and the parade of personalities that made the creation of the museum a reality in 1989.

Organized into five main chapters that focus on the several roles played by the site in the life of the city and the nation, the book provides context for the events that transformed a warehouse into an international tourist destination and takes the reader on a journey through boardrooms and living rooms to understand the strong emotions on both sides of the debate surrounding the preservation of the site that was for many Dallasites "a physical reminder of the city's darkest memory". (33) Weaving oral histories and archival sources in a conversational style, Fagin allows the reader to listen in on history.

In his introductory remarks, Fagin describes Dealey Plaza as "one of the rare sites, often called "sacred ground," where we can literally point to a specific geographic location and say with some certainty that this is where world history changed." (XXIII) In the decade that followed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, many Dallasites struggled to deny this power of place. The visionary individuals who championed the preservation of the Texas School Book Depository did so in a field of almost constant public criticism.

With the first concrete step in September 1972 by the Dallas City Council to preserve the building from demolition, public comments suggested "wrecking the old building." (43) This sentiment was repeated over the years from various quarters. According to Fagin, "the arguments on both sides were remarkably straightforward. For many the continued existence of the Texas School Book Depository was nothing more than 'a sad and disquieting reminder of the assassination for which [Dallas] was criticized by many.' For others, it was recognized as a historic site or, at the very least, an artifact that might further embarrass the city by its conspicuous absence from Dealey Plaza." (185, n18)

For many, the watershed moment in understanding the importance of place was touring the sixth floor space. One of original supporters that guided the project through to completion, Lindalyn Adams, described the reaction of Conover Hunt, chief curator and project director for the exhibit: "When Hunt looked out of the sixth floor windows overlooking Dealey Plaza, she said simply, "Someday, this will be a national historic site." Hunt later recalled seeing "a

national/international site that would be preserved in perpetuity, that will change as each generation looks at it and reevaluates it and finds new meaning of its own for it." (62)

The storyline of Stephen Fagin's book is not an explication of the assassination of JFK or a dry retelling of the founding of a museum. Instead, Fagin speaks to our need, those old enough to remember the events of November 22, 1963 and those who have "inherited memory," to understand why we are drawn to the site and what we expect to learn. In his conclusion, Fagin shares a moment of reflection, looking out from the seventh floor window used by Oliver Stone to replicate the sniper's perch: "I saw pockets of individuals milling about below me, reminding me again of the value of the museum's presence and the continuing significance of Dealey Plaza. In light of my research, it also made me think about the human need to contextualize tragic events and renew them into sites of reflection and understanding." (167) Through Fagin's account of the assassination and commemoration of President John F. Kennedy, readers begin to understand that we may not "shrink before a history that will not fade." (94)

Carolyn Spears
Old Stone Fort Museum
Stephen F. Austin State University

LBJ and Grassroots Federalism: Congressman Bob Poage, Race, and Change in Texas, by Robert Harold Duke. Texas A&M University Press, College Station. 2014. Acknowledgments. Introduction. Chapters 1-4. Conclusion. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 248. Hardcover \$45.00.

This is the story of two Democratic stalwarts who cut wide swaths across the political landscape in the mid-twentieth century on their separate—but at critical times also braided—trails from Central Texas to Washington, DC. Bob Poage, the obdurate but venerable legislator and later Congressman, known as Mr. Agriculture, effectively represented the Eleventh Congressional District for

decades from his Waco base, adroitly reflecting the conservative pulse of his constituency. Lyndon B. Johnson, a product of the Hill Country, was more progressive in his approach and more ambitious in his political pursuits, eventually riding his congressional and senatorial service all the way to the White House. Scions of Texas politics tempered in public service during the New Deal era, both men evolved as masters of cooperative federalism, although they brought their own homegrown definitions and personal frames of reference to its pragmatic interpretation. The results ranged from lasting contributions that changed the social fabric of Texas—and the nation—to heated stalemates on matters of civil rights and education, but always within a shared context of mutual respect and an appreciation for integrity of purpose. Clearly, this is the political story of another time and place.

Historian Robert H. Duke presents a compelling analysis of the two trail masters played out against a seemingly disparate set of issues that included flood control along the Brazos watershed, urban renewal, civil rights, and equal access to education. The author eases into the study, carefully, systematically, and dramatically, presenting the key players as products of their unique, but also familiar, cultural environments. His contextual development helps the reader invest in the dynamic political story, but like a mystery conveys suspense about the ultimate outcome for the state and nation. Along the way, Duke presents a grassroots chorus of interesting, but lesser known, characters such as auto dealer and civic servant Jack Kultgen, publisher Harlan Fentress, and community activists Robert Aguilar and Ernest Calderon, each representing unique perspectives on how to leverage government programs for maximum local benefit. This was an era when success was measured in progress for the common good rather than in columnar totals of wins and misses. With its multiple layers and rich political texture, this is a complex story that, perhaps understandably, few historians have ventured to tell before. Thankfully, though, Duke exhibits no trepidation in mining a wide range of resources, including oral histories, to pursue the truth. As the author noted, "Making representative democracy function at the grassroots level required centralized authority—the quintessential irony of the American political culture." (193)

The value of *LBJ and Grassroots Federalism* is multi-fold. It presents a place-based history of two titans of Texas politics and at the same time gives important weight to the grassroots side of the equation. In so doing, it deepens our collective understanding of LBJ's local power, an aspect receiving only surficial treatment in other studies of the president, and reintroduces a somewhat forgotten regional player of unquestioned significance. In the process, it also sheds light on those who strive for significant change at the local level, albeit with little historical recognition. This is a book as unique as its topic and thus makes an important contribution to the field of political history.

Dan K. Utley
Texas State University

Houston Cougars in the 1960s, Death Threats, the Veer Offense, and the Game of the Century by Robert D. Jacobus. Texas A&M University Press. Contents. Foreword. Preface. Acknowledgements. Chapters 1-18. Bibliography. Index. Pages: 366. \$30.00.

The Houston of the early 1960s was a vibrant, dynamic place full of entrepreneurs and visionaries. It had become the center of attention for the world when NASA and Mission Control came to town, and thousands of people from around the country came to Houston to live and work. Judge Roy Hofeinz had, largely through his own showmanship and determination, managed to convince community leaders to gamble on the creation of the Houston Astrodome, and thereby had secured a major league sports franchise for the city, the Houston Astros. It was into this environment that the University of Houston brought two more innovators, basketball coach Guy V. Lewis and football coach Bill Yeoman.

In *Houston Cougars in the 1960s*, Robert Jacobus examines the rise of UH sports through the prism of these two innovators. Both coaches realized that the key to successful programs begins with the recruitment of athletes, and both further realized that UH was a tough

sell to elite prospects given the fact that sports were a relatively recent addition to UH, and the facilities at the time were woefully inadequate to attract top-flight talent to the Cullen Avenue campus. Lewis, who was considered to be UH's best student athlete up to that point, had a long association with the University, and Yeoman was brought in from Michigan State, where he had been an assistant coach to the legendary Duffy Daugherty. Both men believed that the key to improving their respective programs lie in expanding their pool of recruits, so both men turned to the African-American community. Lewis traveled to Louisiana and secured the services of Don Chaney and Elvin Hayes, while Yeoman signed running back Warren McVea from San Antonio.

It would be these three young men who would integrate UH athletics. Jacobus deftly details the challenges faced by these athletes, and the support they received from not only the UH coaching staff, but also from their teammates and members of the community. Most of the racial incidents experienced by these athletes came not from UH supporters, but from opponents and their fans, primarily during road games. Despite the numerous racist episodes they had to endure, the players became a close-knit group, and the fortunes of UH sports began to rise. The basketball and football programs achieved national recognition, and UH athletics became viable on a national level. The basketball program in particular joined the ranks of the country's elite programs, a fact which would culminate in what would become known as the "Game of the Century" which pitted number one ranked UCLA under John Wooden against Guy V. Lewis's number two ranked Houston Cougars in 1968 in the Houston Astrodome. UH won the game, and would reach the Final Four for the first time that season.

All three of these African American athletes would go on to enjoy stellar pro careers, Hayes and Chaney in the NBA, and McVea in the NFL. Both Yeoman and Lewis would go on to have lengthy and successful careers coaching at UH. Yeoman became known as the father of the Veer Offense, and Lewis again achieved national recognition with his Phi Slama Jama teams of the 1980s. All in all, Jacobus does a credible job with highlighting the role that UH and these three young men played in the integration of college sports, and in fostering a more inclusive environment in the city of Houston.

*Charles Swanlund
Blinn College - Bryan*

John P. McGovern, MD, A Lifetime of Stories by Bryant Boutwell. Texas A & M Press. 2014. Contents: Acknowledgements. Introduction. Chapter 1-7. Appendix A-C. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pg. 262. Hardback \$25.00

Author Bryant Boutwell has accomplished the enviable task of providing an interesting, informative, fact-filled chronicle on the life and accomplishments of Dr. John P. McGovern of Houston, Texas in a writing style that also incorporates the remarkable personal qualities of this brilliant physician. This biography is truly an enjoyable read, and I highly recommend it!

The author's deep respect for the major achievements attained by Dr. McGovern during his lifetime is evident throughout the book, expressed from the perspective of a friend who knew him well. Boutwell follows the life of Dr. McGovern from his childhood in Washington, DC to his significant contributions to the Houston medical community, beginning in 1956 when he was 35 years old. His forward-thinking ideas in regard to healthcare initiatives have influenced programs at both the UT Health Science Center at Houston and the UT Medical Branch at Galveston. The book will be especially interesting to Texas historians, who will enjoy the depth and revealing insights as to how the development of the Houston Medical Community came to be.

There is a generous sprinkling of excellent photographs throughout the book, all of which contribute to the narrative as it moves chronologically from chapter to chapter. One image which I found particularly interesting is on page 122, that of Hermann Hospital in 1925 in the foreground, with the large forest behind it that Monroe Dunaway Anderson's foundation "would transform into one of the largest medical centers in the world." (*author's words from photo's caption*)

Although Dr. McGovern gave millions of dollars through his foundation to help people and promote worthy medical causes, he did not want to be called a philanthropist. He remarked, "It's all about feeling good inside. I think everybody's got an empty spot inside, and I call it the God-sized hole that we have to fill. And you can't do that with Caesar's world stuff---money, property, prestige. That doesn't fill the hole. Love does....Love in the sense of deep caring." (*page 171*)

Betty Oglesbee
San Augustine, Texas

EXXON, Transforming Energy, 1973 - 2005 by Joseph A. Pratt with William E. Hale. Austin; The University of Texas Press, 2013. Contents. Forward, Chapters 1 - 9, Epilogue, Notes. Appendix A - D. Pg. 639. Hardcover. \$49.95

This is the fifth book issued dealing with the 125 year history of ExxonMobil Corporation and its predecessors. It is the first of the series not issued by Harvard University Press. Although the book was issued by The University of Texas Press, it bears the imprint of The Briscoe Center for American Studies. ExxonMobil Corporation donated its historical documents to the Briscoe Center in 2003. Once the collection was in the hands of the Briscoe, William E. Hale, then Senior Advisor to ExxonMobil's Public Affairs Department, made the suggestion to Don Carleton, Executive Director of The Dolph Briscoe Center for American Studies, that the center oversee the publication of the next volume in the ongoing history of the firm. Carleton was responsible for the selection of Joseph A. Pratt from the University of Houston's Department of History and Business. Pratt has frequently written on the oil industry and the history of business in general.

This is an important book. It focuses on the management decisions made by Exxon during the period laid out in the title, and to a degree on the individuals who made them. The period in question is one in which tectonic shifts occurred in the petroleum industry, from an era of stable, cheap crude oil prices in which Exxon was the largest refining company in the world, to an era in which crude is not cheap, nor prices stable. Now ExxonMobil Corporation is still the largest petroleum refiner in the world. Further during the period, Exxon and its competitors had to deal with the rise of national oil companies (nationalization), falling profit margins (not unrelated); the rise of environmentalism, all of which led to attempts to diversify the company. This was followed by the collapse of the oil prices in the 1980's and a second rise of crude oil prices in the nineties which lead to survival through acquisition and consolidation.

Pratt deals with all of these issues on the managerial level. Because of his approach, this book is more suited for upper level Business Majors than the general reader. He opens with an excellent introductory chapter, "Transformation, from Exxon to ExxonMobil," telling the reader what he will discuss in the following chapters. He closes with a fine epilogue

"Transformation, from the Past to the Future," that tells the reader what he has covered and points the direction for the future of ExxonMobil Corporation. In between he deals with the disruption of Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Iran and others countries which nationalized their oil holdings and, the creation of national oil companies which eventually become not only partners with Exxon, but in many cases competitors as well and the shock of the related increase in crude oil prices. The later leads to an attempt to diversify, in some cases into fields that Exxon had never attempted before. When the price of crude oil collapsed in the 1980's Exxon decided to divest itself of industries outside their core focus, and sold off most of these unrelated businesses, including the most profitable, Friendswood Development Company. When the price of crude shot up again in the 1990's, Exxon again began looking for ways to survive in the industry. Ultimately this led the company to the acquisition of Mobile Corporation. And Pratt leaves no question that this was an acquisition, not a merger despite the new corporate name.

Pratt does a good job of highlighting the successes Exxon and its successor ExxonMobil Corporation, but he does not hide management's failures. Most notable is the chapter dealing with Exxon's attempts to diversify outside its historical focus on petroleum refining. Most were failures, expensive failures at that, and ultimately management decided to return to its historical focus of petroleum refining with the expansion of the companies petro-chemical activities. The one criticism of the book is that Pratt uses a gentle hand when taking Exxon to task for the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. And while Carleton in his forward states that ExxonMobil brought no pressure to bear on him, or Pratt, concerning the book, it is quite obvious who provided the funds to make the book happen.

If you are interested in the petroleum industry or management theory and practices, I recommend this book to you. Most readers who do not have an interest in the petroleum or petro-chemical industries, or a general business management mindset will find little of interest, I am afraid. Nonetheless, the book serves it purpose, and will stand as a strong bridge to the next twenty-five years of ExxonMobil's corporate history.

George Cooper
Lone Star College

Tales of Texas Cooking: Stories and Recipes from the Trans-Pecos to the Piney Woods and the High Plains to the Gulf Prairies, by Frances Brannen Vick. University of North Texas Press. Contents. Preface. Introduction. Stories and Recipes. Pages: 390. \$39.95.

More than a collection of recipes, *Tales of Texas Cooking* is unique. Contributions include personal recollections and are arranged by region. But contrary to most in the field, Editor Frances Vick has used the Vegetational Areas of Texas, as cited by Stephen L. Hatch in *Texas Almanac, 2014-2015*, as her framework. Many recipes, consequently, reflect their physical background. Those from the Piney Woods include the preparation of "Pan-Fried Venison" and "Bear Meat" by Preston Mowbray. Contributors from the Gulf Prairies and Marshes, like Jean Granberry Schnitz, tell not only how to make "Dewberry Cobbler" but also how to find the native bushes. Post Oak Savannah cook Nelda Vick shows how her mother's "Egg Noodles" demanded flour, eggs, and drying fixtures. Contributors like Kenneth W. Davis, from the bountiful Blackland Prairies, stress home canning, while counterpart John W. Wilson celebrates the commercial canning ingredients of "Slang Jang."

Cross Timbers and Prairies writer James Ward Lee refers to the ubiquitous swine of the area with his opening lines: "Kill a hog and take the liver on in the house" (p. 213). The South Texas Plains are commemorated in Riley Froh's "Boiled and Pickled Cow's Tongue," and the Edwards Plateau in Jean Andrew's "Pedernales River Chili." Sparse times in the early settlement of the Rolling Plains resulted in Darlyn Neubauer's "Vinegar Cobbler" recipe, and John R. Erickson's comment on the High Plains, "the Panhandle climate...is wonderful if you want the life and juice sucked out of something," explains his beef jerky discussion (pp. 339-340.)

Interspersed among the chapters are copies of hand-written recipes. These add to the second characteristic of this book, its down-home, country nature. There are certain exceptions; the Flynn's "Burgundy Venison" and "Lion Stew," Meredith E. Abarca's "Hugo's Scalloped Potatoes," and Leon Hale's "New York Café Beef Enchiladas" are a few. But many of the most interesting stories include the process

of catching, killing, cleaning, and cooking chickens, the tradition of having "supper" and "dinner" rather than "lunch," the wide distribution of "poke sallet," and the preparation of hand-cranked ice cream.

The stories accompanying the recipes are as Texan as the meals themselves. R. G. Dean's account of his "Dagwood Bumstead Sandwich" recaptures the comic strip as well as Cemetery Homecomings. Sam Cavazos remembers following the crops as a farm worker as he shares "Leonora's Mexican Rice." Monica Gerlach recalls her experiences in the Texas State Fair's Creative Arts (Cooking) Competition and contributes a prize-winning recipe, "Irish Cream Cheese Bread." Carol Hanson describes the many variations of "Ambrosia" and whether her teetotaler grandmother would have included sherry wine as an ingredient.

Finally, the recipes' wide variety captures the inclusive nature of Texas food. Czech kolaches by Mary Kooch, Cherokee pudding from John Ross, Mexican tamales prepared by Maria Aurora Acosta Apac, Scandinavian lute fish offered by Mrs. Ole J. Hoel, English Hard Sauce by Frances B. Vick, and Cajun jambalaya by Gary and Laura Lavergne are integral to this state's cuisine. African-American dishes are as well, their absence the only problem in this otherwise well-edited and fun-to-read book.

Mary Jo O'Rear
Corpus Christi, Texas

NEW FROM TEXAS A&M

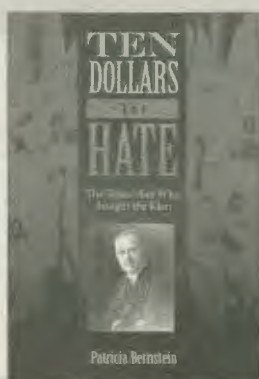
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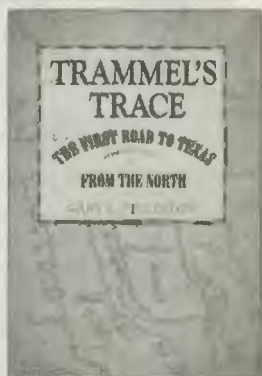
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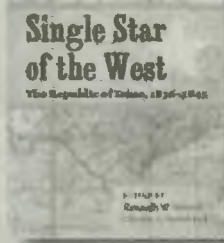
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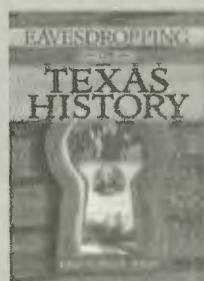
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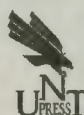
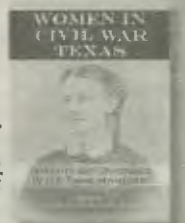
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